MY BOOK AND HEART

CORRA HARRIS

Maller
Room 58

SIGNED

75-

MY BOOK AND HEART

Corra Harris's

In memory of

a happy companionship

Feb 27th 1927

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Carra Harris.

MY BOOK AND HEART

BY

CORRA HARRIS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

FREDERIC R. GRUGER

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

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ILLUSTRATIONS

CORRA HARRIS *Frontispiece*
From a photograph by W. Archibald Wallace

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MY BOOK AND HEART

I

TOWARD five o'clock, early in the morning on the seventeenth day of March, in the year 1869, I was born, and became the eldest child of my parents, Mary Elizabeth and Tinsley Rucker White.

If I should be a son, as was confidently expected, there might be some embarrassment in choosing my own personal everyday name, because I had a distinguished grandfather already dead, and another up-and-doing grandfather with a despotic disposition, who was not dead, and might reasonably expect his eldest grandson to be named for him. But if I should be a mere girl, it was chosen, I was to be named in memory of an aunt who died at the tender age of four years. I understand that she was an attractive child, but she did not live long enough to set an example for me to emulate. I have been mean enough to be thankful for this, in view of the fact that all the other women in the family who did live were so frequently cast into my teeth while I was growing up. The only thing I had from this one was her name, Corra — to the end that all my life most people have pronounced it Cora, and written it the same way, thus depriving me of an "r" to which I am entitled by inheritance.

My father was a planter. We lived on a cotton plantation in Elbert County, that consisted of two

thousand acres. It was mortgaged to the last cotton bloom at the top of the tallest cotton stalk. I was the beginning of the fourth generation of my people to be born under this mortgage. It rested as lightly upon my father as the blue sky above his head. It was, I believe, the skeleton in mother's closet where she kept our skeletons. So far as I was concerned, it was a sort of heirloom that I longed to see as I was sometimes permitted to gaze at my great-grandmother's breastpin.

I do not know if my mother was really beautiful, but she had a soft, meek way of being lovely every day in the plainest clothes. She had fine, steady gray eyes. The red bow of her upper lip was higher on one side than the other. The effect was to give that side of her face a prideful look, and a very gentle expression if you regarded her from the other side. When I was a small child, and had committed a sin, I always remained beseechingly in view of this kind side of my mother's face. She had a brilliant temper. That is to say, I obeyed her, although it was not my nature to obey any one. There was no occasion to obey my father. My impression is that he bootlicked me, thus acquiring the lion's share of my unguarded affections. He was a handsome man, with at least forty gifts, but not very good.

I was well off in the matter of ancestors. My maternal great-grandfather was a Primitive Baptist preacher, a man of brimstone distinction in this early church. He marked his descendants with certain of the fiercer doctrinal convictions, but he failed to entail his piety. No one else among us was

ever called to the ministry, and I do not remember a single one in the whole family connection renowned for righteousness. The women were good, of course; but I came up in a generation where grace and virtue were the ordinary attributes of women, nothing to make a fuss about.

The impression I have of my mother's people is that they were of the common, sturdy stock, level-headed, ambitious, but not gifted. Some such diminishing sense of origin must have rankled in the family, for I had an able and particularly barbarous-looking uncle who hastily acquired a fortune in the medical profession. Then he spent the whole of it and fifteen years looking up our family records in Europe. He returned with enough gilt-edged material to publish what may be called an unabridged dictionary of our ancestors. He proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that we are the direct left-hand descendants of Hugh Capet, an unusually simple king of France — this in spite of the fact that we had always regarded ourselves as the legitimate sons and daughters of Ireland. From that time to the day of his death this uncle wore a high silk hat, trousers that fitted his magnificent legs like the skin, a splendid coat, terrific jewelry, and carried a gold-headed cane. Whenever he was to be seen, on a country road or stepping along the village street, he gave the impression of having just stepped from his coach and of being on his way to the palace.

My father, on the other hand, never referred to his ancestors. But, having watched him with mingled admiration and despair survive every kind of

vicissitude the prancing spirit of a man can stir up, I am convinced that there is such a thing as an aristocrat, and that it is a good thing to have one in the family, even if the pain, anxiety, and expense of maintaining one eventually bankrupt the family. The breed is different from that of common men. It is to be judged by its qualities, not its virtues. It produces the emergency soul. My father could always lead a forlorn hope, but he could not endure the siege of life. There was a flare in him beautiful to behold. When it bloomed, he was a son of God. No one could doubt it. He had an eloquence, a histrionic power for repenting of his sins that made it an honor to forgive him. Now and then he succeeded in a business way, not because he was ambitious, but because it occurred to him to take the top rail, merely as a matter of sport. He was invincible in these moods, and used to raise my poor mother to the seventh heaven of pride. Then some day he would start to market with fifty bales of cotton, return at the end of the day with fifty cents in his pocket and never be able to tell what he had done with the cotton.

My earliest recollection of this father is seeing him on horseback, and at other times stretched fast asleep on an old couch, with a volume of Shakespeare open, resting upon his splendid Roman nose and concealing his face like a sloping roof on either side. Yet he never quoted Shakespeare. What I mean is that he was kin to all bards, heroes, and even to the major prophets of any religion; but there was not one plebeian drop of Job's blood in his veins. He was

no stingier with his integrity than he was with his dollars. He spent everything. But there remained about him to the last a glory, some imperishable honor of the spirit. I doubt if he can be damned.

Such virtues as I have — the power to endure, the will to achieve — I must have inherited from my mother; but there is something rash in me with a reach to it, like a pair of wings in a high wind, that descends to me with a splendid sweep from this father.

The great country house that originally stood on a hill at the top of an avenue of trees had been burned before father inherited this plantation. Nothing remained save the fine old flower garden and five immense red-brick chimneys. This wilderness of bloom and boxwood, with these chimneys rising high above it, was like the neglected tomb of the family's former glory.

We lived behind and to one side of it, in what had been the overseer's house. This was a substantial, homely old farmhouse squeezed down between two spreading mulberry trees. Mother transformed the inside of it into something as lovely and warm as a good woman's heart; but not by any method approved of the modern interior decorator, because for one thing these effects are not a lost art, and more particularly because an interior decorator requires expensive furnishings, and mother had only her affections to spend on this business.

There were five rooms in all, but my memories begin in her room. No paint anywhere; sunny windows, with sky-blue curtains tied back primly;

bright yellow furniture shockingly decorated with wreaths of blue cornflowers; garlands of them on the French bed, with its low sides and rolled foot and headboard. Never in my life, anywhere, have I seen such a white, puffed-up, soft-looking bed! Bare floors of wide oaken boards, with rag rugs that blossomed on them like flowers. A huge fireplace, whitewashed until it glistened like marble. A pair of crazy old brass andirons.

The family portraits had been burned, but mother was not to be outdone. She managed to scrimp up from somewhere two astounding chromos and a steel engraving of Henry Clay. The subjects treated in the chromos were, respectively, one jaybird rampant, one woman with her hair hanging down, clinging calmly to the cross in a stormy sea, which impressed me deeply as I grew older; not the spiritual significance, but how she came to choose such a place to cling to this cross. Why not dry land? From the beginning I believe I had inherited heretical leanings, secret rational faculties that worked incessantly at the underpinning of conventional creeds.

Henry Clay had one side of the room to himself. The two chromos were hung high on the wall on either side of the fireplace. You could not miss them. They assailed the eye the moment you entered the door. But mother's talent reached its full expression on the long mantel above the fireplace. It was set much higher than mantels are now, as if things were to be placed there beyond the reach of small children, even if they stood on a chair. There was an

old clock in the middle space with a pointed top, as if Time looked down at us from a Gothic window. The lower part of the glass door was stained blue, with a bunch of lilies painted on it. The thing had a raucous tick and used to snarl before it struck the hours, as if there was something accusative about time in relation to human affairs. I was afraid of it. On either side stood a flat, fan-shaped vase, china, highly decorated, and always filled with flowers from mother's garden.

Somewhere there was a tall green cup with a bunch of lamplighters in it. These were made of brightly colored papers rolled to a point at one end and fancifully crimped at the other. We had matches; but they must have been kept for emergencies, because I seem always to see mother coming into the merely firelit room at evening, choose a lamplighter, shade her face as she thrust the crimped end into the fire, withdraw it blazing feebly, step slowly to the candle stand beside her chair and light the candle.

I was ten years old before I ever saw an oil lamp. This is what I remember: That she did not light this candle for herself, but for father, who was a brave man that could not bear a dark house. On state occasions — say, when guests had been with us for dinner — two tall glass bowls with fluted columns would be placed on this mantel. They contained preserves, and were not to be trusted in the cupboard to which the servants had access, nor within my reach. Eve staring at the fruit of the forbidden tree endured no greater temptations than

I did staring longingly at those glittering sirupy sweets. The only difference was that the Satan in me was not tall enough to reach them.

There was still another reason why this mantel stands out vividly in my remembrance. Mother kept medicine peculiar to my ailments on it, in the dark corner close to the clock; certain bottles, a cake of mutton suet, and Heaven knows what else. If I had a cold she greased the bottoms of my feet with the suet and compelled me to toast them before the fire. Also she placed a piece of medicated flannel on my little flat chest. If the worst came to the worst, she stewed butter, vinegar, and sugar in a saucepan and permitted me to eat as much of this concoction as I wanted. Such remedies have long since gone out of fashion, but I remember with peculiar pleasure still the warmth and sweet softness of being comfortably ailing, wrapped and toasted before the fire. I always felt blessed and happy at such times.

Later, when I was old enough to go to school, if a disease like whooping-cough or measles started, she tied a lump of asafetida in a thin muslin cloth and hung it around my neck. How she endured the smell of her offspring after that I do not know, but she seemed to derive a sort of militant satisfaction in the precaution she took to preserve me from every contagion. And it was not so bad; that is to say, I was not marked by the odor of this offensive drug, because nearly every other child in school would have a similar charm hung about his neck or her neck. We were healthy youngsters too. I never heard in those days of a school being closed on ac-

count of an epidemic. I do not remember that any of us ever died. The only funerals we had were of aunts, uncles, and grandparents. My belief is that children lived who survived the ordeal of getting their stomach and eye teeth. Statistics would prove the contrary, of course. This, however, is not a chronicle based upon accurate figures, but upon cheerfully expurgated memories. I doubt if any history verified by statistics would be much of a history. It would be a reference book to which only a few people would refer. It would lack the vital quality that really determines the value of history. Give me Plutarch's "Lives" every time. Plutarch, I have heard, was cheerfully indifferent to facts; but there is the glory and charm of truth in the tales he tells of his times. To this day it is fresher, younger stuff than we can write.

But my earliest recollections are not of incidents, nor of people; not even of my father and mother, nor of that good kind old room where I was born. It is of a very large, round, warm day, spread in a sort of bright stillness over wide, green hills; one long day, you understand. There was no night. I must have been four or five years old before I remember any darkness or bad weather. Maybe I was put to bed early. Maybe I had no mind in which to retain the memories of shadows or cold weather. The only impression I have is of being alone out of doors in a bright place. There were servants, and my mother always very busy inside the house; but I missed the bondage of surveillance from which the modern child suffers. My life must have been like that of a

little herb of the fields. I was kin to the grass. I was near to the trees. No one ever called me. No one ever came to see what I was doing. I was free, and busy soaking in space, light, color, and this soft bright silence.

Looking back now, I know where I was — on the avenue in front of the house, but away from it. Probably mother's eye was constantly upon me. Certainly the teeming activities of this great plantation were going on about me; but I was not yet involved in the snarl of human existence. I seem to be moving through shining spaces, not thinking or wishing, merely feeling. Maybe I was still trailing my little cloud of glory. Maybe this was only the one day I remember of that period of innocence and infancy, no longer than any other day, but held still like a blessed vision because it alone interpreted the sense of living I had then.

What I want to know is, do all very young children have the same recollections of heaven weather? Does the little slum brat get this vision of warm, bright stillness? And the children born in mansions? I believe they do. In any case, this is something more important to know than the origin of man, about which we are so greatly concerned. The end of man is the chief thing, whether he lasts after the dust of him is blown away. And if children really do come enveloped in light and peace, so that their very eyes are holden to the bad weather of this present world, it may be the first mortal intimation we have of immortality.

There is a photograph made of me about this time.

I am wearing a sparrow-tail apron, long sleeves, with a neckband that fitted what it was made to fit. I am standing stanchly in a pair of little copper-toed shoes. And for a wonder my pantalets are not showing, but the braided hem of my purple merino dress is below the edge of the apron. I am also proudly conscious of a red flannel petticoat beneath the dress — children were clothed warmly in those days! My hair is fair, straight, the length of fine thin fringe, parted and brushed smartly back from a round little saucer face totally devoid of expression. I have a bulging forehead — slightly top-heavy, you would say. My nose is no more than the faintest smudge of a nose, and I have the woeful mouth of a very young martyr being persecuted by the infamous publicity of that camera.

The one suspicious feature in this otherwise vacuous little countenance is the eyes. They are large, set far apart; but they have not the wide, innocent stare of my tender years. I am concealing myself, dear friends; I have something not to be told behind this look, which is not guilty but secretly challenging. I suppose no one noticed this at the time, an infant with wise eyes, because I did not know anything; but I was born sentient of everything. Some people are not; but when you are it is written somewhere like a warning in your face. Nothing can change it. I have walked much more softly before the Lord all my life than I have felt like stepping. In my real life I have never had the human privilege of zigzagging now and then. I have been unreasonably good at times, and never so

wicked as it is one's nature to be. I have worked up many a virtue by prayer and fasting. I have repented when I might have gone on and forgiven myself as other people do. But never have I been able to get that clear look of pure goodness that women who may be a fraction less good do frequently have.

More than forty years after this picture was taken, when I had just passed through a period of storm and stress with decent courage and was feeling a trifle conceited, spiritually speaking, I did something I had never done before, and certainly never shall risk doing again. I asked a friend who had known me a long time, especially the virtues I had achieved, what she thought of me. I told her I wanted an honest opinion, having every reason to expect it would be a good one.

She caught my eye for no more than an instant, then slid her gaze through the window and remained silent too long.

"I think," she began at last, speaking with abominable deliberation, "that you are the most enigmatical woman I have ever known."

And this was all she said. In her place, I might have been less truthful. But I know what she meant. It is the same thing I am tempted to think myself sometimes when I come across that picture of the child I used to be. The eyes are enigmatical. There is the prescience of too much knowledge in them. If I had one drop of Hebraic blood in me, I would swear my Biblical grandmother was one of Solomon's wives! This is not to boast, but almost to

weep. I seem always to have known more, not of life but of the human heart, than is polite or lawful to know. It is a sort of guilt by proxy that has frequently diminished the reputation I ought to have as a saint, though I practiced some of the noblest virtues, had charity, and have all but given my body to be burned.

I came up as the price of cotton went down after the Civil War. There was no honorable wealth in the country. People who survived the vicissitudes of that awful struggle with substance were regarded with contempt, if not suspicion. We had land and servants and a grandiloquent pedigree, but we had no money. I wore frocks made of linsey. This was a sleazy woolen cloth. The color was invariably purple, with bright yellow stripes woven crosswise in it, so that I must have looked like a little tight-waisted caterpillar. Mother knit my stockings. They were white, and came barely to my knees, where they were securely tied up with a good-looking string every day, and with pink ribbons on Sunday. My pantalets covered these knees and showed a pretty inch or two below the hem of my dress. Starch was fashionable then. A freshly ironed petticoat could stand alone. And my pantalets were so stiff that they rustled splendidly when I walked.

Sometimes now, when I am in New York during the winter, one of the most touching sights I see there is the half-clad children of rich people frisking about in the parks with their bare legs exposed to the rigors of a fearfully inclement climate. Maybe these modern parents know what they are doing.

The prehistoric child was probably dressed the same way, and we do seem to be going backwards in a great many ways, but I am stepping along briskly in my fifties without ever yet having had a rheumatic twinge. I am wondering if these purple-legged children can boast as much fifty years hence. The vivisection of dumb animals is not the only thing going on in the interest of science; equally bold experiments are being made with the health and morals of the human young. It would not surprise me if presently we produced a brilliant, barbarous, stiff-jointed generation, with universities, hospitals, and penitentiaries as the leading institutions of their civilization. Still, you never can tell. This world may be in the travail of a new birth. Out of the dark womb of time so much has come that looked terrible but proved good.

The trail of certain events, scenes grown dim now as the fading light of evening on distant hills over which we passed long ago, seem to trace me out into a darker world from that perfect-day period of my first life on this earth. I cannot tell how many years they covered; probably seven or eight; maybe ten.

I am standing alone on the avenue, still a little blue-eyed herb of the fields. The horizon is purple and golden, with luminous veils of pink and green clouds stretched like a wider rainbow above the setting sun. On the grassy slopes far below, the negro cabins are grouped in a long semicircle, and connected by a path as narrow as a white seam.

All quiet down there; nobody stirring. Then suddenly a small negro boy appears, flying over this

path. He wears one garment, a shirt, split far enough up each side to permit the free use of his thin black legs, which are working like pistons. His head is thrown back, the tail of his shirt flutters behind him, and behind that a long wavering line of smoke. He is carrying a chunk of wood in an old shovel, the end of it glowing. During this long day in the cotton fields the fire had gone out in his mother's cabin. He has been sent to borrow this chunk. As far back as I can remember this was a common sight on the plantation; a little black boy or girl sent out hurriedly to borrow fire with which to cook the evening meal, and these thin lines of smoke following them across the green land.

Aunt Jane usually furnished the fire, because she was always at home. She had a peg leg. Her own withered leg, doubled back at the knee, stuck out at right angles behind, giving her a voluminous look, although she was a very small, thin, brown-skinned woman. When father and mother went abroad for the day she was set over the other servants in the house, and to keep me and put me to bed. This was a great occasion, because she always told me a certain tale:

There was a man and his wife who lived in a little house in a great forest. One day a storm came, blew the door of that house open and flooded it with rain. The wife wept because the floor was wet and night was coming on. Her husband went out with many hamper baskets in his wagon to a wide, bright place beyond the woods and filled his baskets with sunshine. His wagon was piled high with it, and it jostled and ran over the sides so that you could

trace him through the dark forest by the brightness he spilled along the way. And he poured all this sunshine into his house, and the floor dried, and everything was warm and shining inside, though it was now dark outside; and his wife was very happy.

After fifty years I can still hear the droning, sweet voice of Aunt Jane telling me that tale after I am put to bed and the candle is blown out; and seem always to have gone to sleep with my eyes wide open, looking through the door of that bright house in the dark forest at the woman in the midst of it, sweeping the sunshine about, drying her floor.

This plantation was like a small state, not dependent upon the markets or the outside world for supplies and society as we are now. Months passed and nobody went away from home except my father, who frequently returned strangely glorified. At such times the song died on my mother's lips and she would go about the house looking like a saint, very sad and good. Still she reigned. And father seemed to go into a kind of eclipse after his flare. Then he would emerge, or reappear — it is not clear to me which happened — a nobler, better man, strangely gentle and worshipful in his manner toward mother. Then mother would begin to smile again, look less like a saint; and the noise and tumult of the plantation began like a chorus, wagons rolling, gears jingling, the voices of men and women singing in the fields; and I would be all at once very, very happy. This is the way I remember it, the tragedies of love and life that passed over me sweetened back to peace and happiness by my mother's way with father. It

was years and years before I knew what this trouble was or why we were poor, because in fact I knew nothing of poverty or riches. I had no sense of these sordid values.

Sometimes we visited my grandparents in the village five miles distant. Upon these occasions I sat in the bottom of the buggy, always in a trance of delight. Still, emotionally speaking, I would be very sad, as if the feelings I had were too high for happiness. I can see the little girl I was then, sitting one morning on the top step of a high white stile in front of the house staring at the daybreak sky. It was so early that my little red calico dress was still unbuttoned behind. Never since have I felt such deep emotion, a bigness of the heart in my small breast that was suffocating. Everything was glorious. I was like a very small god who had not made the world, but saw it, felt it from horizon to horizon and knew that it was very good. I could not restrain my tears. Something tremendous had stirred my depths, which in a child are heights never reached by the greatest men. The occasion was this: We were going that day to visit these grandparents. This was why the day had begun so early. This was how I had escaped before my dress could be buttoned. Mother was in a swivet getting ready. And this was why I could not eat breakfast — I was exalted in the spirit. You cannot partake of common earthly food when you are about to enter paradise.

But, at that, I was not better than any other mischievous mortal child, for this was the day I set my grandfather's house on fire.

As it happened, mother's sister, my Aunt Ella, with her two children, was also visiting my grandmother. I was permitted to go with my two cousins up into the attic to play. This was a wonderful place. We played, but spent most of the time looking over what was in the old trunks and boxes. Then we found some papers and letters stuffed between a few boards and the outside wall. My older cousin, who was a boy — it is no use to name him by name, for he is now a good old grandparent himself, with many honorable years behind him — suggested that I set these papers afire just to see what would happen. He struck a match, offered it to me and dared me to do it. I had never taken a dare; it felt like a blow in the face; so I took the match and stuck it to the papers. The blaze leaped to the rafters. My two cousins ran, screaming, downstairs to tell what I had done.

"Fire! Fire! The house is on fire!"

The next moment everybody came flying upstairs, my poor grandmother, who was short and very fat, leading the van with a pitcher of water in her hand. They found me standing like Casabianca on the burning deck, staring, transfixed with horror, at the blazing papers. In an instant this was quenched, as grandmother dashed the water over me and everything else in that corner. Mother seized me, dripping, led me by one arm downstairs, and barely reached the bottom step before she sat down and spanked me.

I have never set another house on fire, but I am wondering what would have become of me in a

modern juvenile court for the trying of delinquent children. Most children are delinquents. But in those days the opprobrious term was not applied to us. We sinned freely, and were freely punished by our own parents until the moral order was established in us.

In all my experience as a child, and with other children, I never knew but one who was upright from the beginning. This was my younger sister. I do not remember her infancy or anything about her until I found her tagging along after me in the various small enterprises of life that we conducted together. But she had no normal instincts toward mischief. She must be led into temptation. I remember once when father and mother had gone to visit a sick neighbor, and we seemed to be alone under the mulberry trees in the back yard, I proposed that we surprise our parents by filling up the well.

She readily agreed, and we worked very hard at this business, carrying stones, bits of wood, flatirons, buckets, pans, old shoes, everything in fact that we could find, and tossing them into this well. But it was too deep for us, more than sixty feet. We gave up in disgust at last and went into the garden, where I taught her how to pull up onions. We pulled up a long row of shallots. This was the only thing for which I was punished when mother returned. The little sister was never punished, because mother always correctly inferred that I was to blame.

The next day there was a great stew. Something was the matter with the water from the well. It was

not fit to drink. Mother said it tasted like a dead cat to her; father said it tasted strong of mineral to him, and refused to entertain the idea of the cat, especially as we counted them and found all seven alive and above ground.

I remember standing afar off while this well was being cleaned out, with a certain secret pride to see how much we had put in it, and to watch the consternation of my parents, who could not imagine who had done such a thing — and they never did know.

I had no virtues, but I may say that I was actually the prey of noble emotions. I could be moved to incredible heights of sorrow by my own thoughts, and I took the keenest satisfaction in exercising the sad side of my nature.

Many old Southern plantations have their own burying-grounds. Ours was in the garden; a square place where ancient tombstones stood among the roses and evergreens. I had no knowledge of the men and women buried there, but they were my people. They had been dead a long time, and forgotten. I used to go there in certain high moods, sit upon one of the stones, keen my nose to the heavens and weep for them. I would crumple myself up into a little fat bundle of grief and sob aloud for these relatives, not because they were dead, but because they were forgotten. No one loved them. It was terrible. I was alive and loved. It was my duty to extend the charity of my small heart to them.

My little sister took no part in these orgies. As I have said, she was an amazingly sensible child. She

had no illusions, no imagination. She would never play dolls with me, because she knew what a doll was. It was two pieces of cloth sewed together and stuffed with cotton. She had seen mother make the thing, mark the eyes, nose, and mouth with ink, sew sheep's wool on top of its head for hair. She was never deceived in her life about anything. But she was strangely, sensibly good. For fifty years she lived a better life than I could ever have lived. She acquired the best virtues, and died at last without vanity and without ever having made a fuss about her labor, love, or sacrifice.

When I would be in the throes of worshiping my ancestors beneath these old boxed-in tombs, she would stand at a rational distance, watch me coolly until my paroxysm of grief passed bounds; then she would take to her heels, fly back to the house and tell mother. This was her duty. She always told on me when her conscience demanded that she should.

There was a round plot of grass in this garden where two wide walks crossed. In one corner of the walks there was a clump of sage bushes covered with pale-lavender, bell-shaped flowers, and somewhere in the rear there was a great mass of roses like fine ladies dressed for a party. In the midst of the grass there was a rustic bench beneath the shade of a poplar tree, spire-shaped, with silver leaves always turning like tiny silver fans in the sunlight.

I remember all this — the soft grass, the bees humming among the sage blossoms, the roses swinging and bowing to each other as if the wind that moved them was cotillion music — because mother

often sat on this bench and read her Bible. We had a grand Bible in the house in which our names were recorded; but this book was never opened except on state occasions, when we were born or when we died, or when the pastor paid us a visit and held out-of-season prayers with us — say, in the middle of the afternoon. But the one mother read in the garden was a dingy little everyday Bible. The leaves in it were worn; some were loose and stuck out, or they were turned down to mark a favorite chapter.

On a certain day she was sitting there as usual, her brown hair parted, brushed smoothly back and coiled, her feet crossed, her skirts spread, and her eyes fixed upon the open book. I was somewhere on the grass at her feet, still a very small child, who knew no more of the immemorial past than that Adam was the first man, Eve the first woman, and that Methuselah lived to be the oldest man. According to the back kick of my little short-tail mind, they had lived comparatively recently and passed away immediately before the beginning of real grandparents on the earth. My world was bounded by the garden, mother's room, and the high ramparts of the green hills beyond the avenue. My imagination, if I had any, could not have been taller than the sage bushes behind me.

Then mother called me by name and bade me listen. Dropping her eyes again to the book, she read, "'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'

"There was no heaven, no earth, no stars, nothing, only God. He made everything," she told me.

I SWELLED WITH EMOTIONS TOO GREAT TO THINK

This was incredible; but I believed it because she said it was so, and because when we are very young and innocent it is as easy to believe the magnificently incredible as it is difficult to believe any little good thing later on when we are no longer innocent or good.

She went on reading what happened as recorded in Genesis, pausing between verses, giving me a truthful look as she interpreted them literally. I do not know if she really believed that the heavens and the earth were created in seven of our short days, but she let me have it as it was written there.

I was amazed, exalted, as if she had opened the gates of unspeakable splendors to me. I swelled with emotions too great to think. I saw God, not an image with the face of my father or mother, but a strange inner vision, as by faith we grasp the idea of immortality without being able to conceive of the spiritual bodies of saints. I saw the blackness of nothingness split and light divide the darkness. It is the truth. I remember it well — I saw day break and the new stars shine and the waters divided from the waters.

We live best by faith, not by the mere facts within reach and proof of human reason or experience. I remember walking back to the house with a little barefooted strut, to think that I had been made by a God like that.

Whatever spiritual life I have had, began long after that. But my religious sense came to me that day, a conviction that binds me to the idea of almightiness. Since that summer morning with mother

in the garden, with the Book laid open upon her knees, I have passed over the mountain-tops, through the valleys and shadows of many years. I have discovered that these first seven days of creation cover seven æons of time. I have been obliged to find the evidence of evolution in Genesis, because I am obliged to admit the established fact of evolution. I have been compelled to take off my shoes before the mighty progress of science. But never has my faith in this first chapter of the Scriptures been shaken. Nothing ever written equals the brevity and majesty with which this first book of the Book is written. Millions of years lie buried in a silence that cannot be broken after every verse.

But what was time then? Centuries had not been invented. It is we who demand to be trammeled with the arithmetic of years and spaces. This record was set down with authority and a vast stride that takes no account of our meaner rational faculties. Only a child slipping in, or a saint slipping out of time, has the faith to believe it, regardless of what we call understanding.

I was one of these children. Presently I was to feel the pinch of my transgressions, know the age-old sense of guilt; but not yet. I had a purely human conception of God, and a natural desire to keep at a respectful distance from Him. Once when mother must have been passing through one of her sad, saintly periods, when she would be wrestling in prayer with that particular angel whose business it was to look after father, I came suddenly into the house and caught sight of her on her knees. I with-

drew hurriedly, not from a proper sense of reverence but because I inferred that God must be in there with her, and I had no desire to be in such close quarters with the Almighty. The truth is I have never been a spiritual bounder. The peace of my soul has never been dependent upon rubbing elbows with the witness of the spirit. My faith has always been sufficiently strong to accept the magnificent evidence of all creation that such a spirit exists.

Still, looking back, it is clear to me now that I had a gift for religion, which is quite different from a talent for piety, which I have never had. That is to say, I was aware of my relation to the Most High. It involved no moral obligation, but a distinction that also made me kin to the stars and only a trifle lower than the angels in heaven; not further removed, say, than third cousin to the best of them. This is literally the way I felt. And if the dim, sweet truth of childhood was known, many another child brought up as I was must have felt the same way.

But I quickly learned to give myself airs according to the customs governing this relationship, which no doubt accounts for much of the hypocrisy we all practice. For example, I liked to attend divine service, although the sermon never interested me. I looked for something to happen. I craved an opportunity to show off my grand relationship. If the preacher invited every one who felt that he was a child of God to come forward and give his hand, I went, switching proudly down the aisle when I was so small that he must bend low to reach my hand. Then, with an air of augmented excellence, I would

switch back, crawl upon the seat beside my mother. This vanity sometimes led me to accept an invitation that was far from complimentary and certainly not intended for one of my tender years. One occasion I remember distinctly. A protracted meeting was in progress. I was permitted to go one evening with father and mother, sitting in the bottom of the buggy as usual.

After the sermon the preacher came down to the altar and extended an invitation. The import did not concern me. What I wanted was the opportunity to go up there. As a matter of fact, he asked all those who felt that they had sinned against God and man, and who desired forgiveness, to come forward for prayers.

No sooner said than done, so far as I was concerned. I slid off the bench as usual, scarcely aware that mother had caught me by my skirt as I escaped. The tug of her detaining hand merely popped the button off the belt, and I pranced down the aisle with my dress open behind. Can you see me kneeling at this altar like a little locust, with my pink calico chrysalis split, maybe a trifle crowded by the old black-beetle sinners who knelt beside me? Surely there is humor in heaven over one such lamb as this! But I am touched yet to think of the strident little soul I had then in the light of the years to come that were to shrive me so harshly, leave me such a weary old child of God.

One other thing I remember about that. When we were in the buggy ready to go home, I did not sit in the foot of it as usual; father lifted me to his

knees. And I could feel the chuckles of laughter in him as he drew me closer, like the youngest rib in his side. I did not know what amused him, nor why mother appeared to be annoyed. I was sweetly innocent of myself.

Mother said something, and added, "That child will be the death of me yet."

Father made no reply, only drew me closer. I had no idea what the trouble was, and did not worry, because mother often said that I would be the death of her — and then did not die.

She was a stern woman, and rigidly orthodox. This was not her failing, but her strength. Being father's wife and my mother called for character and strong measures. She was determined to make me a good woman and a perfect lady. The fact that she did neither was not her fault, but my limitations, due to the fact that I was shockingly kin to father in some ways.

She disliked our family doctor. She took his medicine in case of life or death, and I also was obliged to take a dose occasionally; not because the stuff was bitter — all medicine was bitter in those days — but because mother treated him with a sort of austerity, as if she quarantined herself. At last I discovered what was wrong with him. This gentle old man with the twinkling gray eyes was a heretic. He did not believe in hell, the burning lake of fire and brimstone. I heard him tell mother there was no such place of perpetual punishment. This was, indeed, the first time I had heard of it. I left the room immediately and hid myself behind the wood-

pile, because I felt that I was about to have a thought that must not be thought in mother's presence, because I had known her more than once to see through me. I agreed with Doctor Bell. If God was God, and not the Devil, there could be no such place. Then I came guiltily back into the house, having done this thing, and sat at an anguishing distance from mother, knowing that I was no longer in her class, but that I was a heretic like Doctor Bell. I loved her passionately and longed to draw close to her, but I could not believe this about God. Undoubtedly I was of such stuff as martyrs are made of, but fortunately she did not know it.

What she did know was that I either could not or would not tell the truth. She loved the truth, and I have myself come to love it with sensible human moderation; but at that time I was obliged to conceal my small transgressions with prevarications. This was because I feared mother, and I feared her because I did not really know her. I suppose it is the same with us about God. It is not so much that we love darkness rather than light because our deeds are evil as it is that we are not equal to righteousness, and we wrongfully impute to Him our ideas of punishment. The trouble with me was that I could not tell which truth mother loved, so it seemed best to take no chances. Therefore I learned to lie like a man, if you know what I mean. I preserved her peace of mind almost at the entire cost of my veracity. But whenever she overtook me in a fault or a lie, I was promptly punished. She never kept me in suspense while her anger cooled. She did her duty

by me instantly in the spirit of honest wrath. Otherwise I could not have forgiven her. A parent so meanly concerned for the comfort of his own conscience that he can deliberately add the anguish of suspense to a child's fear of the rod by waiting until he can apply the same in cold blood seems to me a moral monster.

One lovely thing I remember about mother in this connection. My little sister had a long and dangerous illness. When she began to recover, she had literally no hair, only a pale yellow fuzz on her head. Mother not only forbade me to call attention to this, but she required me to tell my sister that she had beautiful hair. Tongue cannot tell the joy I had in this permission to lie. I developed a vocabulary for describing imaginary hair that should have given mother a hint of my future career. I suppose she justified herself by faith. Because at last, and until the day of her death fifty years later, this little sister had the most beautiful golden curls I have ever seen.

Somewhere along in these years my education began. With no mental powers at all, I was obliged to learn my A B C's. Until this time these letters had belonged to grown people. Now they became mine, as one claims the pain in his side. But mother put me through, with what anguish to herself I can only imagine, because she was a proud woman who had discovered that her offspring was singularly stupid. I had a horror of knowledge. No bribe or appeal could fire my ambition. I had none. I never have had. To my mind it is the artificial stimulant

of ignoble natures. The power to achieve is in all of us. We get it from God. It is a great thing, and ought not to be called by the mean competitive name of "ambition."

I went A.W.O.L. whenever there was a chance to escape. But I never seemed to get beyond the reach of mother's clear bell-like voice calling me. And the same thing that made Adam come from his hiding-place among the shrubbery in paradise when the Lord said, "Where art thou?" always drew me from the green sanctuary of the avenue to face mother and my A B C's, a small, unwilling disciple of learning.

Later we had a governess. She was a splendid woman and was said to be a good teacher. I do not know. But she must have had some kind of sense not indigenous to teachers as a class, because she let up on textbooks and allowed me to study Paley's "Moral Philosophy" and somebody's "Evidences of Christianity." I could never learn anything that is in an English or Latin grammar; but before I was fifteen years old had read the first five books of Virgil and the "Odes" of Horace. Between my tenth and thirteenth years I read all of Plutarch's "Lives," "Paradise Lost," and Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered." But I had never read a novel when I was sixteen years of age. I was so young when I read the "Life of Numa," that first king of Athens, that it seemed quite possible to stir up a nymph of my own like his Egeria out of a certain spring in the apple orchard. I spent hours at this enchantment, until one day my little sister, watching me from the

opposite hillside, flew back to the house and told mother such a tale of my circlings about this spring and the strange prayers I said that she came down there and broke the spell of nymphs and incantations in me forever. She did right. The fact that quite contrary to my nature and abilities I have become a comparatively sensible person is due entirely to the way mother brought me up willy-nilly. Whether I wanted to come, or stray and dream and be a sentimental idiot, made no difference to her. I had to come up, and with proper attributes.

Certain persons for whom we have no particular affection sometimes take on a halo in after years. This was what happened to Miss Mary Heard, our governess, in my memory. I forgot what a cool, wise person she was, with not a single worldly standard in her fine old gray head. Forty years later we heard that she was visiting friends near us, and my sister and I went to call on her. By this time my sister had endured all things with a courage that ever bordered upon cheerfulness. She had brought up four sons and sent three volunteers into the army that went to France, and she did not show it. What I mean is that she was a pleasant, pretty lady, and I had become a famous woman. Heaven knows as well as I do that this was an accident; but I may show it a trifle. I infer that I do, because when Miss Mary met us she took one look at me and put me in my place. Then she devoted herself to my sister. In her thin, sweet singsong voice she asked, you may say, for her credits. She marked her high on

this report; and she merely gave me the lick and the promise of a look, meaning, I inferred, that she had kept up with me and she did not agree with some of the stuff I had broadcast through the world with a too-facile pen. I do not know how she did it; but she contrived to let me know merely by hunching the back of one thin shoulder sidewise at me that she certainly was not responsible on account of anything she had taught me for the way I had turned out.

Then I remembered, as you catch the faint fragrance of a rose from the garden in the evening, the prim white sweetness of her religious life. She performed the Golden Rule. She prayed with meticulous regularity night and morning, as if she knelt to receive nourishment from heaven twice every day, and probably strength to deal patiently with the ramping young mind I had at that time. My dear sister gave her no trouble at all. She was not a brilliant student, but serenely intelligent. In fact she had the advantage of me, because from first to last she had a good conscience, which I never had. With the awakening of my moral sense I began to feel like a damned child of God; but a child of His, nevertheless, you understand. There have been many times in my life when for the moment I have felt letter-perfect before the Lord, but this was never a permanent spiritual state with me.

Now, seated a trifle in the rear of Miss Mary, who was speaking approvingly to my sister as an old teacher honors a former student who had made good in the world, I received the impression, merely from

the offish tilt of her back, that she had had her suspicions of the kind of mind I had and that the things I had written justified the suspicion. She didn't give a fig for fame. It was what a lot of people thought of you who did not know you. She knew a truly good and great woman when she saw one, and continued to regard my sister with proud affection.

We pay for everything, dear friends; every virtue and every distinction, even more than we ever pay for our vices. The latter frequently come cheap. Doctrinally speaking, I have never been able to live above suspicion, because if a religious doctrine is so interpreted as to reflect upon the goodness and mercy of my Lord, I have not scrupled to give it a twist and a turn in His favor.

Miss Mary was a Methodist who believed in apostasy, as Baptists believe in election and Presbyterians accept the doctrine of predestination — every one of them, I believe, interpretations of the Word that malign the very nature of God. I was present like a heretical odor to her fine spiritual nose.

But this was the only time in our joint social adventure when my sister had the recognition she deserved. She was born somewhere above the mere lettering of creeds and doctrines. She was never concerned about these things, but only to love and do her duty with a clear and sweet precision. She did not pass as I did through the awful anguish of repentance for my sins — secretly, many a time since I have wondered what these sins were of which I repented with so much violence of tears — and she was never converted, as I was, in the flare of gospel

trumpetings. Spiritually speaking, I seem to be noisy. There is an ever-living, sobbing "Amen!" in me that belongs to the row of a Salvation Army service in full swing. My sister was different. She not only had the mind and manners; she had the soul of a perfect lady. Yet in the world where I have moved by the mere accident of achievement, I seem to have been in front of her, obscuring her goodness and her finer charm, always, except this one time when Miss Mary made the right distinction between us.

The time came when I must be sent away to school; not very far; merely to Elberton, the nearest town where there was a girls' academy. I do not know how old I was; probably fifteen. But I had read all the poetry and the histories in our very considerable library. I had finished the "Odes" of Horace, Paley's "Moral Philosophy," that huge book on the "Evidences of Christianity," and done something vague in algebra. But I could not parse a simple sentence or work a sum in fractions, and I never could believe that nine times nine are eighty-one, but was always obliged to refer to the multiplication table to be convinced. I suppose such a preparation would condition a girl for life in a modern boarding-school.

I remember one thing that happened in connection with this change in the scenes of my life. The day before I was to go away, mother called me into her room and bade me close the door. Then she invited me to be seated. Her manner was ceremonious

and her expression proud, but not forbidding. She regarded me with a kind, measuring look and I took it levelly, having passed the period of childish fears.

"Do you know who you are?" she asked gently.

I was so astonished at this question that I said I did not know.

Well, she would tell me. She said that I had come out of a long line of virtuous women. As far back as the memory and love of man reached, there had never been any other than good women in "your family." This was the first time she had ever handed over the family to me. I felt the distinction. She went on to impress the responsibilities. She explained exactly what a virtuous woman was. She was eloquent with the pride of race. Solomon had nothing on her when he wrote that last chapter of Proverbs. I even doubt if he knew as much as mother did about this matter. One thing in particular I recall that she said; because, all told, it was a very strange thing for her to know; but these many years have I verified her beautiful wisdom. She said that men loved good women only; that it was their nature to worship this kind, but never any other kind. A good woman only had the power to keep and save men. My impression was that without them the Lord might as well throw up His hands so far as the salvation of men was concerned. I was the maiden out of forbears like these; their good name was in my keeping. It would be better that I died than that through me the honor of the living or dead should be tarnished. Whatever I learned, this one thing I must never forget, and so on and so forth.

Then she made a little motion with her hand, her eyes bright with tears, and I came and knelt before her. She kissed me. It was a kind of ordination.

She gave me no worldly advice at all about how I should conduct myself to make the most suitable friends; only that I must always be neat, and put a fresh piece of ruching in the neck of my dress every day.

The latter instructions were the only ones in which I failed. I was never noticeably neat. The little hemstitched ruffles so carefully crimped for the neck of my frocks were not always changed. Otherwise I did very well as the descendant of these august women who never engaged in doubtful conduct or conversation.

I suppose mothers know more of the world nowadays than my mother could have been made to believe, and doubtless they give their daughters more sophisticated advice. Still, it gives me comfort to know that I am the only woman born in my family who ever got herself talked about. And I have had some of the kindest things said about me, as well as some that were not so kind.

But can you see me, the girl I was then, tall and fair, with that vague look country girls always have of bewilderment, walking sedately along the village street to school, believing that I was abroad in the world, with a trust to keep, a name to wear like fine gold upon my brow?

Bustles had come back in style. Heaven send that they may never do it again; but I wore one of the things. It was called the Grecian bend, which makes

me sorry yet for the Greeks when I think of the scandalous hump we all had behind. I was a married woman of some years' standing before the bustle went out of style. I recall distinctly the first woman I saw without one; how shockingly flat she looked to the rearward. Then we all went in and took off our bustles and looked the same way, so it did not matter. This is what style is — a sort of whimsical tyranny that we impose upon ourselves.

I remember very little about my school life during this period, and less of what I learned; only the high lights cast by certain events.

The Van Duzer Grove was the scene where most things happened. This was a grove, then on the edge of the town, now long since cleared away. It was here that Alexander Stephens, who was a great friend of my paternal grandfather, made his famous speech when he was winning the Whigs to the Democratic Party. He was a cripple, a very frail man, with a great brain and the heart of a true patriot. He was frequently obliged to refer to his pocket flask when he would be leaning upon his crutches addressing an audience. Once in the enthusiasm of the moment, having forgotten to set the flask down, he waved it quite by accident with his next gesture and shouted, "This, fellow citizens, is the spirit of the Democratic Party!" He referred, of course, to what he had been saying, but tradition still records the flask with a chuckle.

During the period of which I am now writing General John B. Gordon was a candidate for Governor of Georgia. He did not run for this office; he

made a triumphal tour of the State that ended at the Capitol. Incidentally he kissed all the girls along the way — all but one. I remember the day he came to speak in Elberton. Van Duzer Grove was a seething mass of humanity, wagons, buggies, neighing horses and braying mules. Everybody was there from the highest to the humblest; even Jim Jones, the well-digger, who drove his old jack hitched to a donkey cart, and brought his daughter Mandy, who was not pretty and had a ringworm on her face.

I sat with the other academy girls near the front of the audience. Never had I been so moved as I was by that great man. He had a scar from a saber cut across his forehead. He was frightfully red in the face; and, history to the contrary, he was not handsome but spirited; and he was a hero. We worship the breed in the South, and produce them.

When the cheering subsided after the address there was a rush, particularly of the girls, because it was understood that the General would kiss every girl. He did. He must have kissed a hundred as fast as he could bend above their fair faces.

I longed to go up and be kissed by this great man. Tears streamed down my face. But I remained seated and sobbing, because mother had warned me never to be kissed by a man. The women in my family never had been, she said. When you consider that there never has been an old maid in this family, either, you will understand how credulous I was. I felt obliged to live up to this outrageous standard of chastity on this occasion no matter what it cost me. The only consolation I had was the sight

of the General kissing Mandy Jones on the ringworm cheek; nor did he shrink or hesitate. He was a soldier as well as a good politician. I doubt if people were as cowardly about germs then as we are now.

This was what may be called the primordial period of prohibition agitation. Frances E. Willard and a paper called "The Voice" were the chief exponents of temperance. They both came out of the North. But you could do no more with the North along this line then than you can now. Maybe it is the damnable climate up there; maybe it is the colder quality of the people that makes them cling to the stuff like a virtue. Anyhow, the movement really began in the South, among the women at first. Mother belonged to the W.C.T.U., but she did not wear that stinging little snowflake of a white ribbon bow to advertise the fact; probably because she would not hurt father's feelings by sailing forth in public with this reproach to him pinned on her breast. I am sure this was the reason, because if she had considered it her duty to wear the thing she would have done it, regardless. What I mean is that she knew it was her duty not to hurt her husband's feelings. This is becoming obsolete knowledge now. Distinguished authorities write about women like mother as if they were to be pitied. Heavens! If only one such person could have met my mother! She could surpass any grand jury or any court in this country working on the social problems when it came to manipulating father and causing him to patch up his rectitudes.

This issue at that time took the form of local option. And Elbert County went dry that year, thanks to my father. For twenty years he controlled the politics of this county. I suppose he would be called a political boss now. As a matter of fact, he was a crusader. Heaven never made a man with nobler ideals. The trouble was that it was his nature, more than that of some lesser men, to fall short of the glory of God.

Elbert County was very wet. Mother, along with many other women, wanted it dry. But this was before the days when women could get together and put something over as they can now. I do not know what she would have thought about suffrage for women, because the idea was inconceivable at that time. She simply told father what she wanted, and he promised that she should have it. I remember this well, and how happy mother was, and what a mysterious air of pride she wore when somebody said the thing could not be done, because many of the leading whites and all the negroes would vote against local option.

These were days before the negroes came under the political influence of the Northern Republicans and lost suffrage by an effective clause in the Constitution of every Southern State. They voted then as they were advised, and according to the best interests of the section in which they lived. It is not for me to pass upon the ethics of this arrangement. Ethics is like certain doctrines in the Bible. It is a good thing by which men may find themselves damned if the wrong preacher expounds it. In any

case, no system of political ethics was ever yet invented that made the ignorant minority stronger than the intelligent majority.

Local option would be lost or won, it appeared, by the vote in our neighborhood, where there were a great many negroes. The day before the election the liquor forces established a huge camp two miles below our plantation. The only provision made for getting votes was an unlimited supply of whiskey. The negroes flocked in from everywhere. The next morning the plan would be to lead them six miles into town and vote them against a law that would deprive them of every man's right to drink if he chose to drink. It is such a clinching argument to this day, so far as the masculine instinct goes, that ten thousand men would die by the churn if a law should be passed against the drinking of buttermilk.

But father was not dismayed. He established his camp one mile nearer the town. Mother did the rest. At least she thought she did. For two days every negro woman on the place had been drafted to cook. They cooked everything from baked hens and barbecued pigs to cakes, pies, and biscuits. That night two wagons were loaded with hampers of this food and sent to father's camp. Mother wanted to do the thing right. Father was determined to do it by any method, right or wrong. Therefore, quite without her knowledge, he had added a barrel of liquid refreshments.

By this time, according to the law of supply and demand, the camp of the liquor forces was not only perfectly dry, but the inhabitants thereof were

hungry and thirsty. Father sent his temperance emissaries forth to bid them to the feast. They came with a rush. Before midnight their camp was deserted and he had become the host of the largest midnight party ever entertained in this State.

Tradition has it that he ascended the barrel and spoke continuously until morning. He became the swaying torch of eloquence lighting the darkened minds of his guests upon the evils of intemperance. He referred with noble sorrow to his own case. He scorched himself with the fires of hell to awaken their conscience before it should forever be too late. But for his one human weakness father might have been called to the ministry with great advantage to the kingdom of God. As it was, however, his Heavenly Father only appeared to use him in a desperate emergency.

The next morning, being that of the day when this question of local option was to be settled at the polls, I was on my way to school as usual, carrying a couple of large, sober-bound books under my arm, which indicated that I was now far advanced as a student of wisdom. I was wearing a sky-blue turban with a roll brim, on the back of my head. My fair hair was tied with a bluer ribbon and hung in a fine golden brush down my back. The skirt of my frock was composed of accordion-plaited flounces that rippled in the breeze. My bustle stuck out elegantly behind, and I was stepping along with a lisp, if you know what I mean, slightly sway-backed, chin lifted, blue eyes up, too, looking straight ahead in a wide, blue, candid gaze, blissfully conscious of myself and

of nothing else. I had even forgotten that this was an election day; and I was, of course, in total ignorance of what had been going forward during the night between the opposing forces in those two camps five miles distant.

Then suddenly the air began to throb with the thunder of horses' hoofs, the rumble of wheels, volleys of shoutings, punctuated with shrill whoops, and all accompanied by the monotonous droning of music — sacred music, at that; a woeful tune that rose and fell like the noble anguish of men's souls. I halted, listening in amazement. I had heard this mourner's hymn many a time in churches during revivals, but never before blown on the wind of a week-day morning.

The next moment a cavalcade of gentlemen shot past on prancing horses. I say gentlemen, and so they were; but obviously much the worse for wear. Father led all the rest, as was his nature to do. He was wearing a long linen duster. His wide-brimmed hat merely clung to the back of his head. His face was very red; but he wore a noble expression, as if he called upon God to witness the kind of man he wanted to be. He was sitting with studied erectness upon Selim, his old sorrel horse, who did not care to prance, but was being made to prance and switch his tail furiously.

This body of heroes had scarcely disappeared in the dust their steeds kicked up before the real procession appeared, which is said to have been more than a mile long. It consisted of wagons, mules and horses, all loaded with negroes; some riding double,

some astride the wagon poles behind, nobody walking. In those days when white men voted negroes it was understood that they should furnish conveyance to the polls. There must have been five hundred in this procession, and they were all singing that dolorous hymn, and swaying perilously from side to side; but humbly, as befitted sinners on their way to the polls to vote according to their better natures.

Elbert County went dry that day by a handsome majority; and if I remember correctly it was the first county in the State to do so under the local-option law. Kind friends bore father home that evening, not exactly on his shield, but recumbent. I do not know what mother thought of this anti-climax to a glorious day, but never again to the day of her death was she to see him in this condition. He had committed himself outrageously to a righteous cause, and had won it. He was encompassed about by a cloud of five hundred witnesses to this performance. He settled down beneath the burden of his debts and led an exemplary life. He gave up reading Shakespeare and took a weekly newspaper. Virtue had not gone out of him. Rather it was a sort of foreign substance that had entered into him which dimmed him. Instead of the flares he used to have, he was occasionally irritable and exacting like other good men who feel they have earned the privilege of being disagreeable. At such times mother was adorably meek and patient, as if she hoped he would forgive her because he had made himself dully good for her sake.

I have set all this down, not merely to give an in-

FATHER LED ALL THE REST, AS WAS HIS NATURE TO DO

terpretation of the scenes through which I passed then; but because the way my father loved mother, and the way she loved him, is a part of my life. As I grew older it seemed to glow about me. It made good history by which to live. I reckon if they had been against each other there would have developed in me the bitterness of Ishmael. Maybe my hand would have been against every man. Maybe I should never have learned to see through the perversities of human nature; how good men and women really are.

That year ended my school days, but not my education, which had barely begun in the great school of living. I would not seem to boast; but if my name is not recorded in the Book of Life, such as Ph.D.L., signifying Doctor of Philosophy of Love, and D.D.H.H., signifying Doctor of Divinity of the Human Heart, it will be because honorary degrees are not conferred in heaven. For I have studied these things and know them at least with the wisdom of tenderness.

But from first to last I have retained my horror of textbooks. I regard them as a sort of manual exercise of the mind by which unhappy youth is taught to skin the cat intellectually. Never yet have I seen one with the sap of real wisdom in it. A grammar, for example, may teach you how words should be regulated in a sentence, as a trained animal may learn to walk on its hind legs; but my idea of a book on the use of language would be one that taught the beauty and majesty of words; how to love them and choose them like flowers in a garden; how to feel

them like wind in the green boughs in a forest or the sounds waves make against the shore; or how words can be turned like bright horizons on a fair day, or made to tell the inside truth of life, the prayers we feel but cannot say, the goodness in us that so rarely gets the tongue to tell it. A sort of Bible of words, not a mere dictionary or a book of rules to keep your nouns with their hats on, your verbs properly adjusted to the coat tails of their adverbs.

Once when I had written a book in which I used a bifurcated infinitive, because no doubt it was a male infinitive, a man wrote at length about this split infinitive. I say at length, because his letter consisted of a hundred and fifty words all in one sentence. I do not know if the thing could have been analyzed or parsed, but it was a mean and awkward use of words. And that man was the principal of a girls' school in Virginia! No wonder so many women have no more than a chicken-scratching use of their vocabularies.

But let that go. It all depends upon your quality what a word means when you use it. If you are a hypocrite, it is stealing to use any term denoting truth or honor. That, by the way, would be one of the things to be taught in a real textbook on language; and that an honest man inherits all the good, simple, kind, smiling words there are. I don't suppose the idea is practical.

What I am coming to now is the last scene in my school life, which is not set in here as a further proof of my contention about textbooks, but merely to make a mathematical ending of that period in my

life, which was never remotely connected with anything so real as figures.

In those days a teacher made no secret of what his pupils had learned, only of what they had not learned. He did not give written tests and mark us privately upon them. He showed us off. So, this last day was examination day. Everybody's parents were present. I was not a star pupil, but I had a perfectly unscrupulous memory. It served me instead of the usual reasoning powers with which the human mind is supposed to be endowed. I had memorized a whole book entitled Trigonometry. I knew every page, theorem, and logarithm in it without having the least idea of what it was all about.

My teacher took this book, explained briefly what Miss White would do — namely, recite this book, write it on the board. Whereupon I stepped upon the rostrum and began this performance. The board was a continuous black belt that girdled the four walls of the audience hall in the academy. My impression now is that there were about two hundred feet of it, and that the thing extended as high as I could reach above my head.

I started at the northeast corner, laid my left hand, turned honestly outward, on my bustle behind, took a pencil of chalk gracefully in the fingers of the other hand and began. I made the chalk fly. While other classes recited and were cheered, I passed from one wall to another of that board. I covered it from top to bottom with a miracle of marks, lines, figures, and principles. Finally, on the stroke of noon, having been at it for near three

hours, I approached the northeast corner again from the other side amid breathless suspense that burst at last into applause, as I wrote the word "Finis," laid down the crayon stick, and switched off the stage, not a hair turned, probably a bit dusty, which did not show on my white dress. There was renewed cheering, exclamations, admiring glances, as I made my way to where father and mother sat.

Looking back, I think myself that was an amusingly smart performance; but what I remember was mother, swollen with pride, trying to appear serenely indifferent, as if this was nothing to boast of in her family; and the other way father looked — frankly mischievous, not deceived, regarding me with an accusative beam in his fine eye.

Nearly thirty years passed before I took part again in any kind of public performance. I had been the wife of a Methodist preacher for twenty-three of these years. He had worn out, given up his ghost, passed on and left me a widow, truly the relic of the life we had lived together.

I had known poverty as a nun knows her beads; I was acquainted with every grief and every joy. But the nearest I ever came to showing out in all those years would be to testify in a Methodist experience meeting, where there is no cheering or clapping of hands, but maybe some old saint rumbles a fervent "Amen!" And another calls out triumphantly, "Bless the Lord!" And the sisters sniff in tearful sympathy with the virtues you are exploiting, implying by these little cat-sneezing sounds that they know what it is to walk softly before the

Lord, having walked that way themselves. Maybe it is because I have no gift for public speaking, but only for going into my closet and closing the door and writing a book like a secret prayer for others to say, but as one who has received more polite applause from polite people on these rare occasions in later life when I have appeared to make an address, I am telling you that those old amens and hallelujahs heard so long ago linger longer and more sweetly in my memory.

II

THE scenes shift for us in life as they do in a play. The curtain falls, the plans we made roll down with it. Then it rises on the next act and we are not aware of the change. We think we shall go on living as before, but we never do. We have been promoted. Or maybe from having been the star we become the villain, or the buffoon, or one of those living lay figures so often seen on the stage grouped to one side, who have nothing to do, no lines to say; supers, I think they are called. Life is full of them; men and women who seem always to stand aside and watch the world go by, no power in them to raise the dust. But they observe us with a measuring eye as we go by doing our little stunt, and whisper their lines one to another. All my life I have feared them more than I fear the omniscience of the Almighty, because they are not omniscient, and chiefly because my experience is that the defeated and inefficient are the most critical of all critics. They are like dead people with malignant eyes fixed upon the living.

Still, I may be wrong about them; to be human is to be on the defensive, somewhere, somehow. At least this has always been the case with me. And these silent people who refuse to cheer the passing show we are making may be worthier than those of us who, by some fluke of circumstance, obtain a more prominent part. Unknown, not praised, they may do better behind the scenes than we do in the

center of the stage. I have my doubt, for example, about whether the good Samaritan was a prominent citizen in his section. His name is not recorded, only his charity; and nobody was there to see him doing his kind duty by the wounded wayfarer. We cannot tell about these things. Some histrionic ability, a little trick for obtaining publicity, may cast a rascal for the hero's part in life, while the real hero is some one else of whom we never hear. The world is full of prominent confidence men. We only know for certain that the scene constantly changes for some of us, and that we seem to leave the rest of us standing aside somewhere with apparently no part to play.

For me, the curtain fell forever upon the earlier scenes of my life with the applause that followed me from the blackboard that day I copied the book on trigonometry. I had another term in school, where, as it happened, I took a course in love instead of higher mathematics. But the plan to send me away to college in the autumn of that year had to be abandoned on account of another fall in the price of cotton.

I was still in my sixteenth year; and I was in love, but not with any mortal man. I had never had a sweetheart, nor been one; never received the slightest attention from a young man. I cannot think what I could have been about not to have obtained some romantic experience in a village filled with lovers and love affairs! But I recall how sad and lonely I was that summer, most of which I spent moping about the plantation and memorizing "The Lady of Shalott." I literally lived in this poem until

my fate seemed similar to hers, although the setting and the age were different. This was not an island, but the same old avenue. There was no river flowing down "to many-towered Camelot." And no glittering knight rode by to the music of his belled bridle on a prancing steed. But I felt the dearth of love like a curse upon me, and frequently saw myself, like the Lady of Shalott, very lovely and quite dead of a broken heart. I was touched to tears at such times. I was being neglected by an imaginary lover similar to Sir Lancelot.

No wonder the stripling boys of the town and countryside did not appeal to my fancy! I was enchanted by this bright vision of an immortal lover created by poets. I sustained the same relation to him that the modern young girl does to her matinée idol. And from all accounts, I do not suppose the character of Sir Lancelot differed greatly from that of Douglas Fairbanks or other theatrical heroes, except that he appears to have kept better company and repented of his sins, and took a vow to find the Holy Grail, and finished up as a holy monk, which confirmed your belief that at bottom he might have been a good man. But my notion is that it is more elevating and safer for a young girl to idealize a poet's creation of a man and a lover, even if he had been at times an entrancingly bad one, than to worship the leading man in a musical comedy.

I had not yet been saved, spiritually speaking. I believed in God, but more formally, as a doubtful son believes in a righteous parent with whom he must come to terms sooner or later. Then came the

great revival in Elberton. I was converted during this meeting, born again, if you know what I mean — which I doubt, because styles in salvation have changed since those days. They have been modified; repentance has been reduced by a shockingly intelligent comprehension of the natural weakness of human nature, so that a good conscience does not cost so much now as it did then. In those days you suffered under conviction of sin; you wrestled with your powers and principalities of darkness, and when at last you did obtain forgiveness, it really was like being born again. It separated you from the world. You cast your lot in with the children of God and took a different view entirely of the business of living.

This kind of religion is now regarded as merely emotional and primitive. The Reverend Doctor Grant, of New York, who wants a soap-box on a street corner for a pulpit, is fatally wrong in his ideas of what a Christian minister is or ought to be; but he is shrewdly correct in pronouncing this the humanistic age, which is probably one generation removed from being a highly intellectual animal age.

When I think of the holy scenes through which I passed at the time of my conversion, I know that if scenes like them should be staged at the Hippodrome no farce or musical comedy that has appeared in years in New York would appeal so hilariously to the mirth of that humanistic metropolis. Imagine four or five hundred people milling about an altar shouting "Glory to God!" shaking hands, laughing,

with the tears streaming down their cheeks; old enemies strutting about arm in arm; young girls standing about, their faces like candles lit upon a shrine; old women and mothers sitting in a trance of happiness to see their sons and daughters come into the kingdom of heaven. And when the crowd divides, the sight of that long line of drooping figures still kneeling about the altar, unblessed, their prayers ascending like a dirge, so many good Samaritans comforting them with the tender wisdom of saints; and over all the strains of some lofty old hymn like "Children of the Heavenly King, as we journey let us sing," heard and then not heard above this tumult.

The very description of such a scene must be offensive to the attenuated spiritual sensibilities of many of our best people now. Very well, go ahead with your humanics, make a harmonica civilization of this one; but it will lack the tough fiber of righteousness and bigotry without which there can be no enduring civilization. I remember very well when altruism was the side-stepping creed of cultured people; but it was too vaporous and too sentimental to affect the common herd of mankind to which most of us belong. Now this new idealism nicknamed humanics is too low to reach our plagued over-soul, if you know what I mean. Anyhow, the nobility of it is too shrewdly mixed with materialisms to be trusted. My suspicion is that it is at bottom the doctrine of radicals whose piety consists in taking by divine right what the other man has earned. But when he gets it there is no evidence in

him of sufficient charity, humane or Christian, to inspire a redivision of his spoils with any of us.

Two hundred and ninety-three people were converted during this great Methodist revival in Elberton. But the Baptists plagiarized nearly a hundred of them. They started a series of meetings on doctrines near the close of our meeting to prove that we must be elected to eternal life to be saved, immersed to be baptized, and believe in close communion, which is a sort of class distinction before the Lord. I merely state this as a fact, not to criticize this denomination, because it is their duty to preach these doctrines if they believe them, and to snatch as many brands as possible from the Methodists. I cast my lot in with the latter church, and I have never regretted doing so, though it has occurred to me once or twice that my church may have regretted my choice. I can only say in passing, by way of defense, that I have been a better Methodist than a Christian; and I can always look back and see the shining trail I saw the night of my conversion. But maybe it is by looking back that I see it most clearly. My cloud of witnesses seems always behind me now, in the hallowed past. I have heard so much, read so much, been so confused by the joy and pain of living, that I doubt if I have the same assurance I used to have as a child of God. The kingdom of heaven is not so frequently within me as it was when I was a circuit-rider's wife. It is only now and then that I catch the bright edge of the Word.

And I may as well set it down here that I have not

made good in the eyes of the world as a Christian woman, which is the place where one should make good at this business. I have walked a trifle loudly at times through it, but always decently. I have taken no liberties with the Gospels, only a stitch now and then in my own creed to make it fit me morally. I have bestowed my goods thriftily to feed the poor, visited widows and orphans in their afflictions, been a widow myself for a long time, which is an uphill business, and practiced charity when I should have practiced wisdom — all more or less in vain here. My fear is not of the Lord, which is a virtue I have never had; but I do fear the judgments of men and women. I am on the defensive. I have never achieved that sublime deliverance from the mind of the world about me of which other saints boast. Somewhere far within me I am like the wicked who flee when no man pursueth. Whatever defiance I may have shown in obeying my own conscience has been bluffing. I am always nervous and undone when even the spirit of the Lord leads me to do something or write something contrary to the feeling or the opinion of other people, who are frequently Christian people standing at the top of the church ladder.

Maybe this is a form of moral cowardice. But if you consider how much I have done and written along this line, you are bound to admit that I am entitled to a certificate of courage somewhere, either in this world or the next one. Still it would be a great help to me if I could find that other good people have this instinct for flight when they have

used the sword of the spirit a trifle freely. But I have never known one who would admit such a thing. On the contrary, if I have ventured to consult a seasoned saint along this line, she not only claims to be triumphantly free from any sense of guilt or apologetic attitude toward the world in the practice of piety, but she invariably slides off into a penetrating silence and regards me with a sort of damnation interrogative in her eye, which means that she wonders secretly what I have been doing to get this feeling, because it is perfectly apparent to her that I have been doing something not very good.

Many a time after my marriage I used to regard my husband thoughtfully, considering whether it would be safe to lay my case before him. But I never did. I may have been deterred by wifely discretion, because from first to last, strange as it may seem, I had great influence over him spiritually, and none at all any other way. So I must have been too shrewd to make a confession that might weaken this influence.

There is only one exception to this experience I have had with other Christians, recorded here in grateful memory. Doctor Lovejoy was a distinguished minister in our church. He was a tall, dark, fine-looking man. His eyes were black, deeply sunken beneath beetling brows, until the years whitened him and crowned him; a sort of Moses forehead nobly wrinkled. My belief is that he was firmed up morally with a strong streak of bigotry; but spiritually he must have been a very fine gentleman before the Lord. What I mean is that as a saint

he had both elasticity and elegance. His charity was natural, like good manners in heaven, and his wisdom of God was large and kind.

When I was very young, and still inexperienced at dealing with my own human nature — which nothing ever changes, my brethren — in the Christian life, and no doubt was anxious to pose before the world as an estimable Christian lady — which you can do successfully only in your obituary — I consulted him one day about this sneaking sense of guilt that I felt was making me a sort of shamefaced saint, because at that time I was determined to be one. I asked him if it was an evidence of grace — humility, perhaps.

He said it was not.

Well then, was it characteristic of the Christian conscience?

He said it was not, regarding me with a twinkle in his somber black eyes. He told me he thought I would always have it because I had a witty soul, and could not expect to feel as other people do who have grave good souls without a spark of humor.

But I always knew that this wise old Jehovah saint was for me. If my name should come up in heaven where he now resides, I know he would rise, fold his grand old coat-tail wings and nominate me for citizenship in that place. And if he is as influential there as he was for nearly fifty years in the Methodist Conference of North Georgia, I shall be elected, regardless of the attitude of my mortal mind toward the doctrine of election, which has never been cordial. I have always felt to be born at

all was to be elected, to have been chosen for life everlasting which is bound to reach heaven and happiness at last, as daybreak touches the dark rim of the longest night.

At the time of which I am now writing, however, I had not begun to be vexed with the hairsplitting conscience of the religious life. On the old plantation that summer I seemed to have returned to that first estate of my earliest childhood, of brightness and silence. This was the last season of peace I was ever to know. But it was not happiness. When you are very young, with all the dearer experiences of your own human life still to be learned, I doubt if it is possible to be satisfied with merely the witness of the spirit and the hope of eternal life hereafter. The prospect is too far distant.

But can you see me as I was then? So recently shrived of my sins, so innocent of myself, stepping along toward paradise, still wearing a bustle, still vaguely, sadly in love with Sir Lancelot, the maiden mind of me still swinging like a fragrant censer filled with poetry, prayers, and fine illusions? "The Maiden's Prayer" was popular in those days. I have not heard it for years. But it was an instrumental piece, played on the piano with the soft pedal. No words could have been written to the thing, because the real soulful prayer of a maiden cannot be said or sung in words. Her window-sill is her shrine, the moon and stars her witnesses, and she makes her petition with tears. How well I remember the window-sill in my own little room, and the prayers in tears I shed upon it! I had to have

salvation as some people must have riches to insure their happiness in this present world, but what I wanted above everything was a lover. All human beings are dear creatures, especially the young ones, in the artless mixture of their innocence, their desires, even their transgressions, if only we are wise enough and kind enough to judge them by the heart, not the way their conduct looks.

I taught one of those summer schools that year that spring up in country neighborhoods during the "laying-by" season of the crops and die down as soon as the cotton begins to open in the fall. I may say that up to this time I had never really learned to talk. The general impression was that I was turned toward silence, which is a charitable way of saying that I was stupid. But I talked so much by way of teaching that at the end of six weeks I lost my voice and was obliged to close the school. The sum due me from the county for this terrific labor was fifteen dollars. Father collected it. I do not remember ever wanting any money or of feeling the need of anything that I did not have.

My recollections of this school are like the faded pictures of children's faces in a little old album. Mandy Jones's youngest sister was one of my pupils, a pretty child whose pantalets were noticeable because it was no longer the fashion to show your pantalets. I remember she always missed her lesson with the happiest smile. She became one of the plain good women of the community. And there was a yearling boy named Billy Mike. I remember him by his teeth. They were the largest,

whitest teeth I ever saw in the human head, and they were always apparent, though I recall him as a serious young person. And there was a little girl named Susie. She was a downy young thing with blue eyes and yellow hair who always sat in the corner behind the door, and was still the most noticeable child in the room, not pretty or very good, but adorable. Afterwards, when she became a sparkling beauty, still without being good-looking, and a famous coquette, I forgave her, remembering that this was her gift, not her fault. She was as skillful at tuning a man to love as any musician ever was with a piano. It is not vice, but talent, I tell you, to change every man into a lover merely by the enchantment of your presence.

There was a little motherless boy in this school; a delicate child who had some spinal trouble and wore a brace. Sometimes, when he fired up with hot fever from this affliction, I used to sit with him in my arms while I heard recitations. Long afterwards, when he had become a good man and a prominent citizen, and I had been a circuit-rider's wife and was now only his widow, I visited Elberton for the first time in twenty years. I met him on the street and recognized him by the anguished look in his fine eyes that all people have who suffer too much pain in their childhood. And for one moment I had the same wing-hovering sensation I used to have for him. Sometimes I think it is natural for every woman to be the mother of men whether she ever has a son or not, and no choice about it; whether it is a straight man or a crooked one, a good one or a bad one; any

little thing that happens will stir her maternal instinct toward him, even if she despises him every other way.

The eldest pupil I had was a huge young lout of what you may call the sawmill breed. He was three years my senior, and probably felt his oats. Anyhow, his deportment was bad, and he had no higher nature for me to appeal to in this emergency. At last my patience reached the militant stage of exasperation. I kept a long hickory switch. Every teacher did in those days. I called him up before the school to be punished. I closed my eyes and thrashed him blindly, letting the strokes fall wherever a chastening Providence directed. When I had performed this duty, I opened my eyes and stared at him through tears. He was standing with his arms folded like the pleased statue of himself, looking down at me with a sort of witty sympathy. After this his conduct was as correct as a polite joke.

I would not risk praising the woman I have become, but for the girl I was then I have at least a sneaking admiration. Especially when you consider that she had recently passed through the emotional crisis of repentance and conversion, which is an experience that frequently has a softening and sentimental effect upon feminine character. The modern young girl may have presence of mind enough to defend herself even with her dear little naked fists. I have heard that she has, but I hold it would be very unusual in this age of merely equal rights for a sixteen-year-old girl to have the moral courage and power of personality to pull off such a

stunt as this, and do all the work, with no assistance at all in the way of resistance from her victim. Some credit, of course, may be due the young man for the forbearance he displayed.

I not only believe in prayer as a spiritual exercise, but I believe in answer to prayer; that we do get what we pray for if we place ourselves in an attentive, executive mood for accepting the answer when it shows up. This is essential. For example, if you pray for the ideal lover of your fancy, and a real human man with a cast in one eye, and both legs bowed, and no money in his pockets, appears upon your scene, you may not recognize him as the answer to your prayer; but he probably is. What are your qualifications? How would you feel and look, anyhow, as the wife of the prince of your imagination for whom you prayed so earnestly? This is what I am telling you about prayer: It is a form of spiritual negotiation and ought to be made honorably, according to what you are worth in exchange, especially if you are praying for a husband.

This is what we did in my young days: We prayed romantically for a lover, and then accepted sensibly the man who showed up in response, whether he was a rich and handsome man or not. So more women in proportion were married then than now are. My suspicion is that the modern young woman prays for a position or a career, if she prays at all; and that even if she wants a husband, he is not an answer to prayer, but a sort of secular addition she shrewdly makes to herself in the way of worldly

position or wealth; or she wins him in a flirtation as you trump something in a game of cards. What I mean is that piety and prayer have gone out of the modern marriage prospectus. It is becoming a legal contract that may be more easily dissolved by law than almost any other contract. This may be for the good of the race and for society, but if it is, the countenance of goodness has changed since I was young.

In January of the following year I was sent to a school in another part of the State, of which my uncle, Mr. Wootten Matthews, was the principal.

I may have learned something from the texts I was supposed to study, but nothing that I can now recall, as we do not remember the bread we ate when we were young and growing. It was here that I met Lundy Howard Harris, who was my uncle's friend, as one scholarly man is of another man; not quite so learned, but more fiercely established in what he knows. That is to say, they were congenial intellectual antagonists.

I have no reason to suppose that this man suspected I had been asking my Heavenly Father for him. One must be old and have prayed many years in secret before one gets that sweet, longing, prayed-faced expression. Some of us never get it, no matter how much we pray. And I was equally far from suspecting that he was the answer to my window-sill petitions for a lover, because the answer to prayer so rarely looks like the thing you asked for. By no stretch of the imagination could Lundy Harris be said to resemble the Lancelot ideal of my dreams.

He was a man of letters, erudite, and wore a beard. Lancelot certainly was no scholar, and by the poetic license of my maiden fancy I had always thought of him as being clean-shaven. How I ever came to fall in love with a man who wore a beard is past my present comprehension. But two years later I was to become the wife of this man, and he was to be my circuit-rider, William Thompson, the hero of those tales.

He was more than ten years my senior. He had been editor of the "Southern Christian Advocate" for two years, and later one of the teachers of Greek in Emory College. At the time of which I am now writing he had not been called to the ministry. But he was the descendant of four generations of Methodist preachers, with a side line including a bishop behind him. Undoubtedly the Lord recognizes heredity in managing the affairs of His kingdom in this present world. Lundy's two brothers also were Methodist preachers.

But when I first knew him there was nothing about him to suggest the witness of the Spirit or the tyranny of righteousness under which we passed all the years of our married life. He was a handsome man, not tall, but erect, and carried himself till the day of his death with the swift rhythmic step of a happy soldier marching to any fate. His complexion was very fair, highly colored, his hair coal-black, already gray about the temples. A kind brow that always served to show the good weather to a man of his spirit. A straight, beautiful nose; fine, lively blue eyes that could darken and change to a deeper

look of wisdom and back again to a sort of earthly brightness. Never was there a man with such a heaven-bound spirit who had such a kindling eye for the wit and comedy of human life.

The manners and customs of lovers vary according to the times in which they live. There was a period not so very long ago when Sir Knight riding by seized the lady of his choice, slung her across his saddlebow, and rode away to his castle a properly married man with all his love-making still to be done. And if I remember correctly, a certain novel with the scenes laid conveniently in a remote desert, and portraying a marauding sheik as such a lover, continues surreptitiously to be the most popular book to read in the best society from its flappers all the way up through its club-cultural stratum to its apex of political-minded women engaged in the most searching reforms. We condemn the thing, because the most strenuous work we have to do is to equalize the relation of the sexes where the balance of power has always been with the cave man. But we read it because it makes a damnably fascinating appeal to the original feminine instinct, which cannot be changed by the ballot or any other demand upon us. The fact remains that the more modest, sane, and sensible a woman is, the more she contradicts herself by wishing for a bold lover who will relieve her of the responsibility of being too coldly sane and sensible.

But I came up during a period when there was no such provision as psychoanalysis made to explain or excuse doubtful romantic conduct. Now it is dif-

ferent, maybe for the better; but it does not look so very good.

In any case, I suppose a courtship of nearly forty years ago would seem as tame and ridiculous now as a religious revival of that period would seem boisterous and spiritually unkempt in a modern church. Still, I must fill out this record with one little leaf of love as I learned it then.

Girls are easily attracted, but men are not. Even when they seem to be, they are only prospecting in love to pass the time agreeably. I shall always believe Lundy's first interest in me was one of amusement. I was a gawky young thing with a deep emotional nature and a mind absurdly garnished with fragments of ancient learning, stuffed with familiar quotations from great poets, and a sublime sense of space that I had got from reading after Jean Paul Richter, and no doubt from spending so much time on the wide green hills at home. I remember the artful mischief with which he used to draw my fire, the quizzical gleam in his eye when I would buck up and hand him an opinion on the life and times of Pericles, or split a rational conversation with a quotation from Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered." I must have been showing off, as we say now.

Nothing saved me from being a stick but the fact that I was always tremendously stirred by my plagiarisms. I remember the amazement with which he regarded me when he learned that I had never read a novel. It was the look a rich man might bestow upon a starving child. The next day he sent

me a copy of "Molly Bawn," by the Duchess. What has become of that book? Does anybody read it now? And who was the Duchess? I have forgotten. Fortunately I was away from home at this time, and my uncle believed in light literature for girls as we all believe in wings for butterflies. So I studied "Molly Bawn" and must have derived great benefit from it as a textbook on love. For forthwith my association with Lundy ceased to be intellectual and took a more intimately personal turn. This may have been his dark purpose in lending me the book.

I remember the first love letter I received from him, and how entrancingly guilty I felt; and the first walk we had together one spring morning through the blossoming woods to Sabbath school. I do not recall that we arrived there; but I remember how dear the day was, like a whole world's answer to prayer; how green the moss looked under the trees, little white flowers blooming like kisses above the sod and the faint sweet fragrance of trailing arbutus.

This is what love can do to us — make a holy vision of every common sight. It is a good thing. And no woman ever forgets that first pilgrimage she makes with her lover, even if it is along a dingy village street. Nor his tender flattery, nor his vows, those first ones. I am old, and love has passed away, but I never see young hickory buds swelling like green lilies, nor pale violets bending in the deep shade of the woods, nor a wren building her nest low behind a heart leaf, that I do not recall some of the glory and sweetness of that day; and my lover

as he was then, not shadowed by the awful wings of God as he was afterwards for so many years, but lifted with a sort of gayety, taking note of my timid reserve with a reverence shot through and through with a man's humor.

And I remember myself like the picture of a girl I used to know in a story long ago; the honest little straw hat I wore, with the brim cupped like a bonnet in front, very narrow behind, tied sidewise under my chin with blue velvet ribbons; the blooming green beard of the oaks beneath which we passed sifting down upon this hat and over my shoulders; the prim white dress I wore, short-waisted, and a sash with tucks and a ruffle at the ends, floating back behind me stiffly like the white tail feathers of propriety — the skirt very wide, garlanded far up the sides with a tiny ruffle crisply fluted; the way the wind blew this skirt teasingly back like billowing white veils behind me, and clinging close in front.

I have noticed this about the wind: when it catches the skirt of a middle-aged woman, it flaunts the thing roughly, as if nothing mattered; but it whisks the skirt of a girl softly, meaningly, as a handkerchief is prettily used in a flirtation, or like a neat little cloud that belongs to her.

For so many years now the wind has dealt harshly with me, and life has been such a terrible friend to me, it is hard to believe that ever I wore a frock like that, or felt so near and kin to the blossoming boughs above my head. I am not complaining, you understand; for never yet have I known a soldier,

however victorious, to return from the wars in a fine shirt with his cravat properly tied. He is a bit frayed about the edges; there is dust on his shoes. I reckon by this time I may be something like him, coming back home across the kind green hills of Time, tired out, but with a reasonably good conscience.

But when you are old and peacefully settled behind your years it is a pardonable vanity to boast of how beautiful you were as a girl. The homeliest woman I ever saw will do that. She may have a parchment complexion, a nose drawn up at the corners and spread like a bulbous knob at the end, thin lips that look like a puckered stitching, a mere wisp of hair, eyebrows so sketchy that they show like rubbed-out lines above her faded eyes; still, she will toss her palsied old head, give you a proud look, and inform you that she was a famous beauty in her youth. She may, indeed, be telling the truth, because age does make astonishing changes in the human countenance. Nature seems to lose interest in you, once you have fulfilled her purpose. But my belief is that we only remember how beautiful we felt when we were young, whether we were or not. So, bearing this in mind, I merely record the fact that I felt during this transient period of my life as lovely as the loveliest. And I may add as a sort of psychological phenomenon that this sensation has never entirely passed away. As near as I can tell, it is an inward feeling, grave and sweet. But no mirror I consult confirms it, no picture or portrait ever made of me bears more than the faintest,

kindest resemblance to the stern-featured Empire face I have now.

The end of the school term was at hand. On the last night before I was to leave for home, Lundy came as usual, not anxious or sad at this parting, but as if everything had been settled between us, when nothing had been settled beyond the fact that we loved each other and knew it.

There was a final scene in the moonlight during which I kept faith with those pluperfect women of my family by the hardest. Lundy graciously declared a moratorium in the matter of this kiss until I should realize that the debt I owed him was more important to pay than any allegiance I owed to my feminine ancestors. I remember something he said about this: that the dead were the most rapacious of all creditors, and once you started a living account with them, it never could be settled, which shows how unscrupulous a good man can be as a lover. Still, I think there is something in this point of view. The people who pass away do frequently hold a sort of a mortgage on our liberty and conduct, else I suppose we might spend life too freely.

But with my hand clasped in his, and an elderly lady moon for the only witness, he told me when I should be old enough we would be married and live happily ever afterwards.

At the time I was contented with this assurance that took me so much for granted. But years later, when wisdom came to me like a broken spell, I used to recall this proposal, which was no proposal at all;

too casual, like the good-bye of a kind man to a child; and I had my misgivings about whether he really meant it for better or worse. But not even from him in paradise shall I ever know the truth if it should be diminishing to my pride. He had chivalry so fine that it must still characterize him as a saint. As for me, I regarded him as an answer to prayer, by which the whole of my life was fashioned. As the years passed this impression deepened, for I have learned that an answer to prayer is no light and frivolous gift to satisfy some human whim; but it is a stern and beautiful thing that binds us to God. And I reckon this is what my husband became to me—a tie that bound me to His kingdom of heaven.

So I have never fashed myself about those other women who claimed to be the "Circuit-Rider's Wife" when that book appeared. If they show up on the last day there will be no such confusion about whose answer to prayer he used to be as there was in New York one time when three of us simultaneously appeared in that town. A certain morning paper published an editorial demanding explanations, which seemed to reflect upon my identity, because the circuit-rider's wife from Arkansas was on hand who had lectured all over that State in the most feeling way about her experiences in the itineracy, and the other one from Virginia had just been magnificently entertained as the author of that book. But if you have really been a circuit-rider's wife it takes the worldly rostrum strut out of you, and you cannot make a travesty of yourself to wring dollars and tears from an audience. Also, it takes the social

starch out of you. And you cannot pose as a celebrity at a reception with your books spread on the library table as printed proof of your distinction. I suppose audiences can recognize a tear-drawing lecturer when they see one, and I suppose society in particular easily recognizes a woman who looks elegantly like an authoress; but I am wondering if the old right-eyed world would not have instantly recognized me as the circuit-rider's wife if an honest-to-goodness picture of me had appeared in that paper the next morning.

On the evening of the eighth day of February, 1887, I was married to Lundy Harris in the living-room of my father's house. We have lost the vocabulary and the imagination to describe such a wedding as that was. No bridesmaids, no display of wedding presents; only a wide, kind old room, lamplit and fire-glowing, filled with a few relatives and friends who had known me all my life. I wore a white gown, not satin — nun's veiling, I think was the material — with winged panels of lace, and my first pair of white kid slippers. And we stood in front of everybody, with a tall window behind us which had long crimson curtains over lace curtains that were draped back with evergreen vines. As I remember it, this room glowed like the very heart of love with a sort of green crown of leaves on it, probably these vines. And the boards of the floor were still bare, but very wide and white; and a sword with a bright hilt was slung above the fireplace; and I can still hear the roar and crackle of the

blazing logs on the wide white hearth. I can see Bishop Atticus Haygood standing a little way off with the open Book in his hand; but for the life of me I cannot fix my attention on him, nor upon Lundy by my side. For in the deeper shadows behind him I can see mother, somehow seeming to stand alone, and apart from every one else, though father must have been beside her. But I did not see him; only mother regarding me with a strange foretelling look. I did not hear Lundy being married to me; I heard only the busy crackling of the fire, and saw mother's long, long look through me and past me beyond all the years to come, until the bishop called me by name. Then her face seemed to fade. She was no longer between me and this vow:

"Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou obey him, serving him, love, honor and keep him in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?"

I have been told that I answered, "I will," in a stronger voice than is the custom of brides, who usually take this vow in a meek undertone. Anyhow, I kept it!

Every Methodist pastor is required to read the general rules of our church once a year, and preach his sermon that day on these rules by way of stimulating the weakening saints in his church. I must have heard a hundred such sermons in my time; but never yet have I known a preacher in any church to read the marriage vows from the pulpit and take

them for a text with which to search the consciences of dilatory wives and delinquent husbands, and maybe restore love and loyalty in the homes of his people. I have wondered about this, especially during recent years.

Why should a church be so particular about reminding you of your membership pledge to behave yourself, love, honor, and support the church, and leave you for forty wearing, tearing years without reminding you of the vows you took when you were married? They are more important and far more binding before the Lord. For you can be a divorced woman and still be a prominent member of your church. You can be divorced three times, for that matter, and still sing in the choir. And you can be the very fiend of a husband and still be a steward in the church with a good collection-taking countenance.

I do not say that you will be damned, my brother, for this meanness tactily encouraged by your church; but I do say that the Lord will lather you and chasten you somewhere, somehow, no matter how liberal you are or how pious you look stepping down the aisles of your church on Sunday with your collection tambourine filled with fluttering bills, if you are charged in your last accounts with debts of love and honor and faithfulness to your wife that you did not pay. And if there are any drudges kept in heaven, I doubt not they will be selected sternly from that class of women who had such good taste for expensive things that they bankrupted their husbands in this present world.

What I mean is this: With the motion pictures showing how ephemeral marriage is, and comedies making the relation ridiculous, and the best plays dramatizing three-cornered love affairs, with one corner unlawful, and the courts granting divorces at the rate of twenty-five an hour when they start a day's grinding-up of marriage vows, it does seem that preachers would say more than they do from the pulpit about the sanctity and glory and permanence of marriage. Instead of that they get together on their blue-Monday mornings and pass resolutions advocating a revision of our divorce laws! There can be no honorable revision of marriage vows, you understand. They are permanent.

I think one trouble is that whether we marry for love or not, we expect happiness. I do not know why we do, because it is not promised in the Scriptures; only peace, at a great price. In life it comes to us and goes away. We have no power to will it or keep it. Even the Constitution of the freest country in the world does not guarantee it; only the pursuit of happiness, because, I suppose, the eminent psychologists who wrote the thing knew that we would pursue it anyhow. And I remember, like any other lover, Lundy promised the same thing — we would be married and live happily ever after. And we did; but it was a happiness strangely like sorrow; sometimes like the high, keen anguish in the noblest lines of a triumphant hymn.

Formerly we were the sons of God, but I doubt if the Almighty makes us now; we seem to be making ourselves. And formerly men were called of God to

preach the Word, but now they seem to preach like smart fellows who chose the ministry as a public career. We are passing through a period of rationalism, materialism, and humanitarianism. But it will not last. We cannot bear it long, for the works of our minds lead to spiritual suicide, and riches pass away, and humanics is a commissary of foods and ideas respectable people keep to nourish each other.

There is nothing divine in any of these secular provisions for the spirit of man. They only make him eminent in this present world. They do not promise the one thing we forever crave— life, and more life, even to life everlasting. They do not recognize the fact that immortality is an instinct, not a conceit; and that there is an answer that confirms it, as even the instincts of the flesh are satisfied, else we should not have them. So I say men will be called again, sooner than some of us think, to preach the Word; and once more they will become the great teachers and builders of men.

I do not understand this. I have often wanted to flare up and preach, but I never have felt the call. My skirts seem to be in the way. Still, there is such an experience, or used to be. I have known a little dizzy fellow to hear it and be transformed, and I have known great men who heard the same voice calling them, and I have seen them fold away every worldly ambition to answer it.

Lundy was one of these. He was as far from the ministry as any other secular young man with a brilliant future when I first knew him. But some time during the year previous to our marriage he

was called to preach. No good end will be served by recording the tragic circumstances attendant upon this period in his life. I was myself ignorant of them for many a year afterwards. It is enough to say that he obeyed the call, was licensed to preach, and joined the North Georgia Conference in November, before our marriage the following February. He was sent to the Redwine circuit, which consisted of five churches.

Our wedding journey started over the narrow-gauge Seaboard Air Line Railroad between Elberton and this appointment, which was twenty miles distant, and it continued round and round that circuit during the year. I carried a heart for any fate, not knowing much about fate; and I wore a brown seal-skin turban, a long brown coat, and a smart little frock made of brown tricot cloth. Coat suits were a later invention. I felt very pretty, and must have been, with my bright hair showing against this rich dark color; but why I had all these brown things I cannot imagine, when I had always worn the more entrancing shades of blue. Maybe it was because I was to be a circuit-rider's wife and felt that entrancing colors would be out of place. Drab shades have ever been associated with the practice of piety, which is queer when you consider what a futurist the Lord is in ravishing colors.

When we were settled on this circuit Lundy had six dollars; I had a trousseau that filled two trunks, a thimble, a pair of scissors, several spools of thread and a needle case — the tools of my profession, you may say — and what more could one want? So far

from being dismayed, we felt rich. Love, dear friends, is the only wealth that counts up right, even in this present world. The other kind is something we spend, or it is something we pinch and swindle and starve to save and are too mean to use; but love is a fortune that increases with poverty, trouble, and sickness. It is the immense dividends we declare upon the vicissitudes of life. I never believe the old saying, "When poverty comes in the door, love flies out the window." Love abides, whatever happens.

From that day till the day of his death, Lundy was never in debt, although we never had what an ordinary laboring man now would call a living wage. At last when his long day's work was so tragically finished and he was laid back in the kind dust, and his frugal funeral expenses paid, I had two dollars and forty cents. But he made it through without a debt behind him, except ten thousand debts of gratitude to him that he never thought of collecting. When I think of his touching charities, the rage he used to fall in toward Christmas-time when the worthy poor were hawked about for funds to feed them, and how he denied himself to bestow little personal blessings upon the unworthy poor — when I think and think, and never get through the years and years' end of his good deeds, I could go out and kiss a thousand stars in memory of him.

The burden of these sacrifices fell upon him, for I never felt a sacrifice in my life; and I have never known poverty, not even in the years when I had one good frock for Sunday, and one pair of shoes for

Sabbath and secular use. But I believe it was different with Lundy. He craved books. He longed to travel; never man had a more famished eye to see his own particular parts of the world, such as Greece and the Holy Land. He was a strikingly handsome man who carried himself with an elegant air. He was born prideful in the flesh, and it must have been that he had some vanity like other preachers about his pulpit appearance. But he did not gratify this. I could almost count the suits he had during the whole of our married life. He made at least half the distance between earth and heaven in half-soled shoes, and I used to make his cravats. His only recklessness was in the matter of shirts. It was very difficult for him to pass a good-looking shirt in a show window without at least going in and asking the price of it.

I remember well the first time this vanity popped up before me. It was the day after our marriage. I was unpacking my trunks, spreading my frocks and things on the bed and chairs, showing my bridal plumage to him. He began by being pleased and praiseful of all these fine feathers. Then he fell silent. Presently he excused himself and disappeared. An hour later he came in with a stack of new shirts. No bride of his should have more frocks than he had shirts!

What beautiful things we remember of the dead that we took for granted while they lived, missing the charm and loveliness of a look, a word or some little deed that afterwards sends a fragrance down the years! I recall now so many things like this of

Lundy; how absent-mindedly he used to kiss me good-bye in the morning as if this was something he had done so many thousand times it was like batting his eyelid as he hurried by me. But it is a thing you never forget to do — bat your eyelids. So he never forgot that kiss that fell on my face anywhere.

He could not bear a skimpy table frugally supplied. Nothing else depressed him so much as barely enough to eat. He desired there some evidence of bountifulness, merely as evidence that the wolf was nowhere near his door. I believe he was always anxious about that. To produce merely the appearance of plenty required management. There is now somewhere in this house an old blue platter upon which I used to serve an omelet made of two eggs, but beaten to an exaggerated froth to fill the space. Then a wreath of bacon browned and curled like autumn leaves, and at each end of the dish I made out with a huge bunch of parsley. He was indifferent to food, and would as soon eat one thing as another; but the sight of that dish fussed up like this with anything always cheered him. Sometimes when I had poured the coffee and was ready to be served he would say, looking at me, "And you, my dear, who deserve everything, what will you have?" as if there was a wide choice in foods before us.

Now at last I have hit the old trail covered by the circuit-rider stories: but I shall never travel it again, not even in a book. This time I am keeping close to the intimate memories of life in my own heart.

Still, we may sometimes cross the old trail quite by

accident. This is what happened to me last summer. I was returning to the valley by motor from North Carolina. I was not thinking about the direction we were taking. I had spent the long day swinging down through the hills mulled in the bright sunshine. Late in the afternoon we passed through the little town of Hartwell and out again through the wide level fields for another hour. Then suddenly I was aware of something familiar, as one might feel, I imagine, if he took a walk thirty years afterwards in the cemetery where he had been buried. Maybe it was the shadows of all things lengthening across the land like the wide palm of the approaching night that reminded me of another evening long ago. I cannot tell what it was, but I knew this road, and that presently it would turn toward Redwine Church. Years and years ago, at this very hour, Lundy and I had been upon it. We were on our way from Brother Fleming's house to Brother Agnue's home to sit up with somebody who was sick there. This was in May of 1887, when the scourge swept over Redwine community and so many of our people died.

The scenes were greatly changed; only here and there the shell of some old homestead where we had visited in those days; many new, finer houses. Once the road seemed to change its mind and start off in the wrong direction. And I could not find the woods upon the edge of which Redwine Church stood. Nothing lasts, my friend, but the earth, and we change the face of that according to our will and greed. I saw at last a clump of pines standing in the

distance, where I remembered a forest. By turning out of the main road we approached this grove. And presently I saw Redwine Church, where Lundy had preached his first sermon after we were married, and where I came a shrewdly prim young bride to sit among the sisters in their amen corner, which was a silent corner, so far as the spoken amen was concerned.

I believe if we can wait long enough that every honorable sorrow will become a kind of joy. My heart filled with memories as sweet as a song as I stood on the threshold of this church. We must have had our anxieties and hardships that first year, but I could not recall them. I could remember only the happy fearlessness of my youth, and Lundy standing in this pulpit, a young man, not chastened as he was afterwards.

Nothing was changed in there — on the floor a little pious litter of Sabbath-school papers, the benches a trifle askew as they used to be when we hurried into the aisles after the benediction; the hymn books scattered on them, with the backs of these books sung off as usual; the same organ, I believe; the same altar; the great gilt-edged Bible solemnly closed, with the same broad white ribbon marker hanging from between the leaves; the wooden brackets still on the walls where the candles used to burn and shed such a dim, pious light.

I did not see the empty house, but all these benches filled with people, so many of whose names are now carved upon the tombstones outside; rows upon rows of faces that I had forgotten; the very

way the women's hats looked and the long he-goat beards of the saints; and the little red-headed man who was converted the night Lundy preached on the prodigal son — how stodgy he looked as a newborn soul, and the way I laughed, not piously but with all the relish of humor, when he sailed down the aisle proclaiming himself this returned prodigal son, when we all knew he had never been away from home, nor very bad.

One change there was, but it must have been in me. I remembered this as a large church with a wide altar where many penitents could kneel. Now both seemed strangely contracted. But since I knelt there in the dusty amen corner so much water has passed under the bridge of the spanning years. I have been to some of the ends of the earth and back again. I have seen so many huge churches, such lofty spires. I have worshiped in great cathedrals, of which this church would be no more than a chapel in a corner. I have seen so much splendor in the way of religious scenery. And there was none here, nothing to lead your mind to a creed or distract your thoughts from the Lord. If you never had a great soul, but are by way of becoming a good old rocking-chair saint, this is a better place to kneel and pray than in the lonely wide gloom of a cathedral.

I came out and wandered awhile among the tombs, seeing those that had been so white when I was there gray with lichen, and the names like shadows upon them. I abhor cemeteries, but I love these little churchyards where the dead rest for-

gotten, no fashion at all about the way their graves are furbished up and kept. They look more peacefully dead to me, the less the living have to do with them. I want no meddling with my dust once it is laid. I want to feel the tall grass wave in the wind above me, and die and live again, as I shall live again, simply according to the immortal nature of my spirit.

III

It is not my purpose to be tediously accurate or disgracefully truthful in this moving picture of my days and deeds. I reserve the right to put my best foot foremost and to avoid excessive modesty, which in a case like this is more likely to be false than the honest pride we all feel in our nobler attributes. I shall take the liberty of dwelling upon these. If I am obliged to admit the abrasion of a virtue, I shall do so with a clever ointment of words and pass swiftly on to some other virtue in a better sense of preservation.

My plan is to make this record a good thing, like a kind old book that you may have forgotten for a long time. Then some day when the weather is bad you come upon it quite by accident, and you sit down before the fire and turn the yellow leaves. There will be things in it to laugh over, not because they are witty, but absurdly natural, like something you did or said yourself a long time ago; now and then a little reminder of the way you used to feel or hope that brings a moisture to the eye, not distressing, merely the kind sweetness of tears. There will be scenes in it like your own memories, sorrows that are sisters to your griefs; the troubles and trials we all share together behind the closed doors of our own hearts, but no great difference now between some harsh experience and the gentler joys. For the past softens everything. It sheds a brightness as if the

years cleared away the shadows, eased the pain we used to know when these days were filled with the anguish of a great struggle.

In the circuit-rider stories I am aware of having shone forth frequently in the celestial radiance cast by the circuit-rider's halo. So many of the scenes were laid before the Lord and bound up in the Word. But you cannot have all the scenes of your normal life glistening with the sublime effulgence of the Beatitudes; and I am a normal person, at times tenaciously human.

Lundy had one advantage: he had been called to preach the Gospel, visit the sick and the widow and orphan in their affliction, comfort the saints, seek and save lost men, baptize infants, bury the dead, and to be diligent in taking his church collections, which is much more of a job than you can imagine if you have never dealt with the financial side of a Christian congregation. But never yet have I known a man to be called to domestic service in his own house.

This is the call a woman gets when she marries him. There is practically no romance of spiritual emotion connected with it. You do not hear the divine voice; you never have the glorious privilege of wrestling in prayer to make sure you are called. You know it and see it as a plain everyday duty from which you will not be relieved until death parts you from that man.

I had no vocational training for this business. I belonged to that class of magnificent paupers in the

South who kept a retinue of servants. When I married, I had never put my own room in order, nor cooked the simplest meal, nor so much as ironed a handkerchief, although I had been brought up in a beautifully clean house, where the cooking and serving of food was a fine art.

This was not mother's fault, but mine. I was not too stupid to learn, but too smart. Some instinct must have warned me that a woman accomplished in the domestic arts is frequently enslaved by them. For I distinctly remember, when mother had her periodic house-cleaning rigors, I used to seize a book and fly to the uttermost parts of the avenue until the frenzy passed. Then I returned, calm and blessed, to the smooth white bosom of her dear house.

Thus years passed after I was a married woman before my impersonal chastity strengthened to the proper feminine animus toward dust in unseen places. Maybe one reason was that we were so much in the dust of the road those days, traveling our circuits. When you have married a pilgrim journeying toward the kingdom of heaven, you never feel settled in your broom-sweeping mind. You have no abiding-place; at the end of the year you will pack up and move to another parsonage that has just been vacated by another pilgrim and his wife who have left it pretty much as you would leave your camping-place of the night before. Nobody cleans up his camp when he is going out of it.

I do not know what Lundy thought of my defections along this line. My suspicion is that he was

not aware of them. He was always a studious man, and after he became involved with his Lord he was strangely indifferent to his earthly condition. Maybe I took advantage of this fact. I make no defense of my negligence; only this retort: my experience is that women with argus-eyed minds for detecting dusty corners and untidy places are not the most generous or attractive women I have known. They are too competitive in that thing which is only next to godliness. They remind me of a word pronounced by an illiterate person with the accent on the wrong syllable, which takes all the distinction away from that word. They have all the trivial virtues and none of the great ones. And there is one of them on every parsonage committee in every Methodist church in this country!

The cleanest woman I ever knew, however, had no such disciplinary rights over me. She was a highly intellectual person. She was the wife of a man who taught higher mathematics in a university. They came to us from Ohio, but I always felt that she must have been born in New England. She had an apartment of five rooms, but there were six working days in every week. She house-cleaned one room every day, moved everything out of it and scrubbed its very ears. On the sixth day she studied the history and architecture of Westminster Abbey. I do not say that it is actually immoral to spend one's life this way, but I do feel that the soap-and-water expression she used to put on in my house was unchristian. She was incapable of seeing my good points, which I have. Her husband was only a

mathematician to begin with. I doubt if such a man requires the same kind of personal attention and affection to keep his heart up. I do not suppose she ever had to take the Gospel in her own weak hands and restore him when he had lost the witness of the Spirit. A mathematician can do very well without divine guidance, but a preacher cannot. Neither can he sit down with a text on calculus and work his way back to God.

My culinary accomplishment as a girl consisted of a certain pudding that I made very well. When there were guests at the table, I was extravagantly praised for it. Fame, as I have known it, is as nothing compared with the intimate and personal distinction which I enjoyed as the author of that pudding.

Sometimes it has occurred to me that I might have done well to stick closer to my pudding-making talent. It might have broadened and developed. I have observed that a woman may boast of the cake she bakes and no one resents her pride. On the contrary, men praise her, and women plagiarize the cake if they can. But give yourself the same airs about a book you have written and see what happens! If we must solve the problems of life by the psychoanalytical process, here is one for you that is more important than it appears to the naked eye: Why do men praise a woman for her cookies — I never knew one to despise a woman on account of her cakes — and shun her if she writes a poem? Maybe the divine fire that produces verse does something to her personally, liquidates her dearer-

to-man charms. But if you ask me, I am frank to say my belief is that men prefer the pretty culinary type of woman for the same reason that the Lord in ancient days looked with favor upon those who made choice sacrifices upon His altars. Now He requires a more intelligent form of worship. But it seems easier for the Lord to change the methods of His will toward us than it is for men to revise their instincts toward women. I am not complaining. What I mean is that there may be something everlasting and providential in these instincts. If so, we may as well give up our ghosts as citizens and public-spirited brush-brooms, because we cannot defeat Nature no matter how much sense we think we have.

If I was not a neat housekeeper in those early years, I have attained the virtue in these latter years. And Lundy in heaven can never say that I disturbed his spiritual atmosphere when he would be preparing a sermon by cleaning up his desk or closing his commentaries at the very place where he had been reading. And what I cooked was cheerfully cooked, even if it was burned. I never really learned the art of preparing food, although to this day I have my kitchen flurries, atavistic periods, when I must cook long enough to be defeated before I can fall back and rest on my other laurels.

Sometimes I was even successful in these adventures, but rarely in a legitimate way. I remember one of these occasions. We were stationed at the place called "Celestial Bells," in "A Circuit-Rider's Wife." We had a neighbor there, a generous Chris-

tian woman, who was better than three wise men at bearing gifts, especially food. If she saw our presiding elder swinging his coat-tails through the front gate, I was almost sure to get a bowl of salad or ice-cream for dessert before the great man was settled on the porch. Now she has broadened out. She is one of the foremost women in this State, distinguished for civic virtues; but I never see her picture on the society page above the information about what she is doing now without remembering the little kind things she used to do over the back fence of the parsonage yard.

One day she gave me a basket of vegetables that contained a huge yellow yam. I decided to convert it into a sliced sweet-potato pie. This is a Southern dish and cannot be made to taste like the real thing anywhere else.

Lundy was out for the forenoon, attending a church conference; but he was not feeling well spiritually. I expected him to come in depressed. It was necessary to do something unusual and cheerful, even if it should be at the expense of the sterner moral order. I believe this motive alone inspired me to make that pie. The recipe copied here will give you the point: You slice the potato and steam it until tender. You make a pastry crust, rolled very thin, line a deep pan with it and place in the oven to brown. Then you place the sliced potato in it with a latticework of toasted strips of the pastry between the layers, being careful to add sugar and spice as you go, also much fine butter. You cover the whole with pastry, crimp the edges, and make a mysterious

hole in the center about the size of your forefinger — I always use my forefinger.

So far so good. Any one watching you will think the hole is to let the steam escape. But the thing will have no snap or distinction if you set it in to bake with merely this open valve. It will contain only a virtuous mass of glutinous potato and pastry flavored with spice. But if you pour into the orifice I have mentioned not less than four spilling wineglasses of apple brandy, you have something inspiring and too delicious to condemn.

This is the pie I made that day. Do not ask me how I obtained the brandy! Those were not bootlegging days. Preachers did not make an excuse of keeping the stuff even in case of sickness, and I never knew one to expect to be bitten by a snake. Personally, I do not shrink from telling where I got it; but I would not guide the accusing finger toward a generous friend already amply praised in this record. And do not reproach me for making such a pie. I do not pretend that it was an act of piety. But who can perform righteousness all the time? I have my suspicions of such people. You may not pour brandy into your sauce; but it is worse to heap censure upon the head of a fellow creature. In my case there were extenuating circumstances. We were poor and rarely had anything rich or worldly to eat. I used to buy a little steak and split it. When the two pieces were broiled, you could see through them. Besides, how was I to know that this pie was to profane the breath of a bishop?

I had scarcely thrust the thing into the oven be-

fore Lundy came in accompanied by one of our bishops, his presiding elder, and a holiness preacher. Whatever else may be said of me, I was a valiant hostess in those days; and Lundy had a spirit of hospitality far above material things like food. We entertained a great deal. This time, however, I was abashed. The lunch was unusually bountiful, but the pie was too fragrant!

We passed leisurely through the first course with the usual church conversation, which was more ponderous than usual out of respect for the bishop. They were a good way off in the mission fields, I remember, when at last the table was cleared and the dessert placed before me to be served. But their noses were still present. I was so nervous the spoon tittered against the rim of the pan when I thrust it in. The steam arose, an aroma iniquitously pleasant filled the room. I felt the conversation jolt like a heavily loaded wagon that halts at a bad place in the road. I was aware of the fact that the bishop had heaved himself about in his chair and was regarding the napkin-swathed pan with solemn interest. I heard a sigh, and caught sight of the holiness preacher leaning back with a singularly keen look on his face, which was a lean one and might be naturally edged up.

Then for the briefest moment I glanced at Lundy. His look was one of the wildest amazement. He seemed to be yelling at me with the blue-blazing horror of his eyes to stop, not to serve this dreadful thing! All this happened, though not a word was spoken. I went on serving. I was a bit edged up

myself by this time, and may have showed it in a heightened color. Let one man of them refuse to partake of this pie! I might be subjectively a preacher's wife, but officially I was the mistress of this house. What I provided had better be eaten, and no questions asked!

It was! The bishop led all the rest. He was a man and a gentleman. Even the conversation took a lighter, happier turn. And the pie was consumed to the last remnant and drop of spicy juice. But it was not named or praised. Neither was there ever the remotest reference to the thing between Lundy and me. Preachers are really human beings, and may be treated as such if you are clever enough not to let on that you know they are.

This is a harvest of memories, you understand, and I reserve the privilege of going back and forth through the years to gather them like ripened sheaves in the sun. What is the use of setting down dates? There are none recorded in Genesis or Revelation where the great visions lie. Besides, if I do, some one who knows me and remembers maliciously according to the last forty calendars will rise up and contradict this record. Therefore I lay my scenes behind the closed doors of my heart and defy the world to time them.

In many particulars the first year of our married life was the happiest and hardest to live. Love, for one thing, must pass from an ideal to a principle. A husband is the past tense of a lover, and a wife is the holy revision of a maiden. This was the transition period.

One little memory creeps up now in my heart like a pain. It was several months after our marriage. I was well, but not feeling very well, a bit drowsy, no longer radiant and ready to laugh or step into the road for a long walk. Lundy came in from a round of pastoral visiting, animated, probably better satisfied than usual with the prayers he had said, and closer kin to his people. Anyhow, I could not rise to the occasion. He wanted to know why I had nothing to say. I told him it was because I didn't have anything to say. Had he hurt my feelings? No, I replied tearfully. Still, my feelings were paining me some; you may say on general principles, as is frequently the case with a woman in my condition. He reminded me that I used to be a bright girl; meaning, I felt, that this was a good while ago, and I was no longer a girl nor bright. I remember the effort I made to sparkle then, but nothing shone forth. I had no ideas, no funny tale to tell, no acting, which was one of the ways I had of amusing him. All my faculties were somnambulant. The spell of another life yet to be was upon me. I cannot recall what disposition he made of me at the time, but I do know that neither one of us understood the situation.

On the other hand, I remember how bereaved I felt when he grew less attentive to me. It was a diminishing sensation. He was more and more absorbed in his work, his prayers, and his seeking after God. Looking back, I wonder that I did not turn upon this God who was depriving me of the love and comfort of my husband! At last I was entirely absorbed into his life as a part of his peace and strength, of which

he was no more conscious than of his own heart. This is not only natural; it is right. But at first I was jealous. I suppose every woman feels the same way, even if her husband has no God at all, but a business, or something that engages his attention and excludes her.

After a while this is what I found out: that she is not really excluded. She is his home, his refuge, and his sanctification. If she is good and wise, he is safe no matter what kind of man he is. And he knows it, as he never knows heavenly salvation. Just let go your end of your life together, fall back on the bed, give up, and see how upset he is. But don't do it too often. Husbands are clever creatures. They know when you are fudging, even if you have deceived yourself.

I mention this because sometimes in the earlier years of our married life I may have tried that myself. Looking back from this distance, and in view of the superlative health I acquired later from awful necessity, I am inclined to think I did. Most women do. You have only to brood upon the feminine griefs we all have long enough to raise a temperature or stir up a sick headache. You can even put your mind on it and come down with a case of nervous prostration. But it is not playing the game. Any woman can bear children, keep a clean house, and behave virtuously; but it takes courage, fortitude, and a great heart to be a good wife.

I remember very well the first revelation I had along this line, when I began to appear to myself dimly as the refuge and citadel in my husband's life

that was to protect him from the precipices in his own mind and even from the terrors of the Lord. It was some time in the spring after our marriage. I had been moving along happily by his side through those hardships which when one sets them down read like awful trials, but were really like high grades on the long road we traveled that led over some little mountain-top where the view was clearer and the air fresher and sweeter, spiritually speaking. A gay young human being, you understand, prancing my beatitudes for love of him and basking in the light of his halo as good little flowers bloom obediently in the sun. It did not occur to me that this brightness would ever fade and that winter does come to the souls of men like bad weather and frost upon the fields.

Lundy was about to begin his first protracted meeting when suddenly he lost the witness of the Spirit — of all things to happen to a preacher at such a time! I know now what ailed him. It was stage fright before the Lord, for this first revival a young pastor holds after he thinks he has been called to preach the Gospel is the test. If backsliders are reclaimed and sinners converted, he knows the Lord is with him. But if that revival is a flash in the pan, so to speak, and there are no spiritual rumblings among the saints, no signs of repentance among the lost and the potentially damned, he is undone. He feels that he has committed the sin of presumption in daring to enter the ministry. This, at least, was the point of view taken in those days. I do not know how it is now, because everything is different. A protracted

meeting is not called a revival, but a series of services — a humble, cowardly phrase in my opinion that frequently exactly describes the performance. I have seen a preacher stand before a modern church congregation like a whipped son of God and speak a cold-storage Gospel that would not move the soul of an Eskimo, if you know what I mean.

I may be wrong about this. It may be that the souls of men are cooling off, congealing, and must be saved by refrigeration. But in those days the kingdom of heaven that was to be set up warmed the heart, and taught their lisping, stammering tongues to sing. If we were right with the world we had a sort of gayety before the Lord. Maybe it was all an illiterate performance, but there was something amazingly comforting in it that seems to have passed away. Therefore I never attend one of these series of services. They depress me; I get so moved and nobody else seems moved at all. And I am not what you would call an illiterate person. I may even have an illustrious soul for all this world knows.

The trouble with Lundy was that he had none of the arts of an evangelist. He had a quiet manner and a gentle-speaking voice in the pulpit. He never could rant about his Lord, and he had country congregations accustomed to being moved by the loud voice of the Gospel. Another thing, he was always stubbing his toe, spiritually speaking, against some little transgression. I never could convince him that to err is human, and that the sin he had committed would pass as dead leaves fall from the living tree. He would invariably retort that I did not get that

quotation from the Bible. I do not know where I got it, but it fits. Some of the best Scriptures have been written by sinners!

I was appalled this first time of which I am writing when he told me that he had lost the witness of the Spirit, the more so because I immediately discovered that human affection, even the tenderest, will do no good in an emergency like this. It was borne in upon me that I was probably one of the millstones hung about his neck. He had been too happy in our love. His mind had not dwelt as constantly as it should upon holy things. I held my peace at the time, but after it was all over and the revival had shot up in a great blaze of spiritual fire, I reminded him of what he had said, and told him that I was considerable of a holy thing myself.

We seemed to be surrounded for days by the powers and principalities of darkness, while I stood afar off in great trepidation. I was anxious for his peace and concerned about the very real problem of living. I have never lost my worldly mind. It is a sensible thing to keep behind the door even when you are in a spiritual ecstasy. If Lundy did not get the witness of the Spirit he would withdraw from the ministry. In that case, what would we do for a livelihood? When you are not very well, and are by nature becoming strangely helpless, such an anxiety is terrifying.

At last one evening he told me he was going up to the church to pray, and he would not come home until he received the assurance he desired. Then he kissed me as if he might be gone a long time, or forever, and went out.

I put out the light in my room and sat down beside the window in that dark house to wait. Can you see me, dear hearts, so young, terribly frightened, but too sensible to pray? For I have always known that no man ever loses the witness of the Spirit. All things bear witness to His Majesty, power, and love. The thought that made me sit trembling for hours was what was the matter with my husband that he could not know and keep this simple faith.

There was a cherry tree in full bloom outside. I remember still how the blossoms brightened and glistened like a bridal veil in the moonlight, and how the black shadow of the house lengthened and crept over them until there was no moonlight, only the white flowers of that tree looking at me through the darkness. I was not aware then of really seeing them. I had a curious feeling of being asleep with my eyes wide open.

The coolness that comes before daybreak like a wind parting the dark curtains above the world aroused me from this trance. I sprang to my feet, stumbled through the door, and fled along the road to the church. I was like a poor young lamb looking for my shepherd.

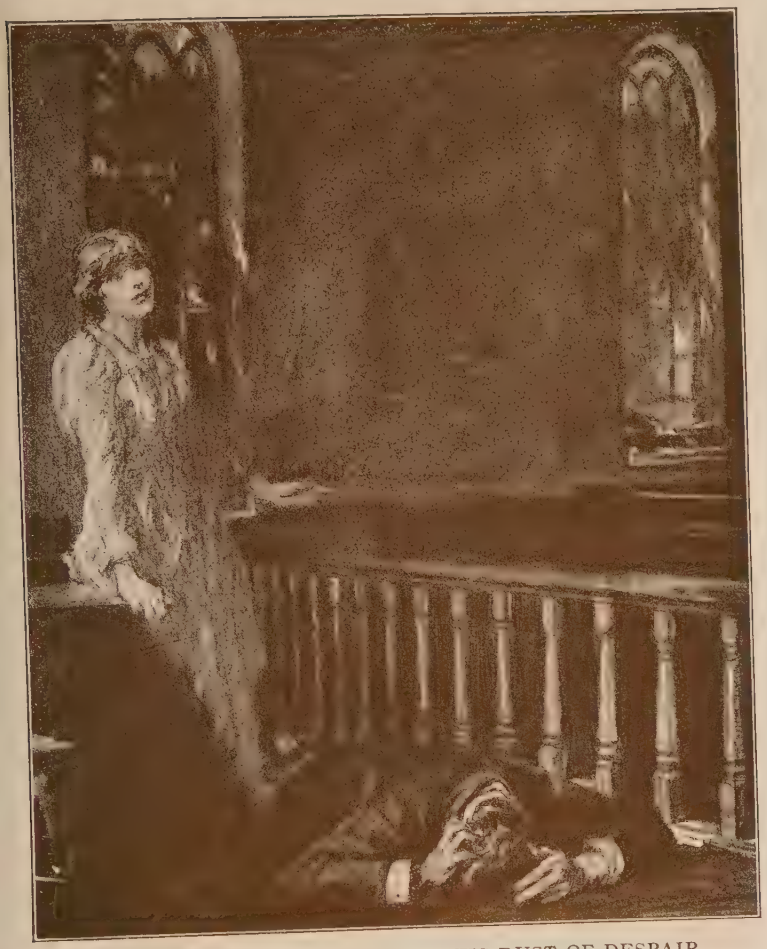
I found him lying face downward before the altar. I wanted to fall upon my knees beside him and weep. But this was no time to show the white feather of a woman's tears. Maybe for the briefest moment a mortal hard pressed against the Almighty can feel something like the angel of the Lord. Anyhow, I felt suddenly able and wise, the grand sensation of a

courage beyond the reach of every fear as I stood leaning against the altar, talking down to Lundy in his dust of despair. I remember nothing of what I said, only how he lifted his face and looked at me, as you look when you awaken from a bad dream, and find that you are not alone.

Many a time in the years to come I was to deal with him like that, but this was the beginning of wisdom for me as a wife.

His protracted meeting began the following Sabbath. I remember something about that revival, which is not recorded in the circuit-rider stories. Lundy had been preaching the unmitigated Gospel for days, without lifting his voice, which is a fearfully impressive way of doing it. The altar was filled with penitents under conviction for sin at every service. But not one of them could be born again. I began to be very uneasy. If no one was converted, Lundy would feel that the Lord was not with him and that his ministry was in vain, which was the tragedy my mind spelled out a thousand times during the next twenty years. Something must be done. I was not accustomed to talking to penitents, but you may say I was blasphemously determined some of these people should become jewels in Lundy's preaching crown.

I slipped from my place in the amen corner and began moving among them, whispering practical instructions about getting into the kingdom of heaven. I have often wondered since what I did say. Looking back, listening to the faint echoes of that prayer-shouting time, my suspicion is that I did much to as-



TALKING DOWN TO LUNDY IN HIS DUST OF DESPAIR

suage and soothe the remorse in these penitents that Lundy's calmly terrifying interpretation of the Gospel aroused in them. Anyhow, I was startlingly successful that night. Among the other stricken souls about this altar was a young man who was an open-and-aboveboard sinner. Of them all, I recall only what I said to him. I told him not to worry.

"You may not know God; very few of us do; but He knows you. He is quite as close and kind to you this moment as He is to the preacher or any saint in this house. He is love. All you have to do is to believe that and do the best you can to behave yourself. It is very simple."

To my purely mortal stupefaction he leaped to his feet, spread his arms as if these arms had suddenly become wings, and let out a whoop. He announced in a loud voice that he was all right! Then the lid came off and everybody was converted. There was a great furor in which the fiercer old saints joined as if they hoped these young, gentler ones would recognize them.

As for me, I was scared stiff. My knees trembled. I sneaked back into the amen corner and sat there feeling like a sort of spiritual Puck who might be damned for this. Thirty-odd years have passed like swift shadows since that night; but I can still see that young blond giant rearing on his hind legs before the altar, glory and beauty in his face. And I can see my circuit-rider, the way he looked at this young man, as if he loved him with that awful love men get out of the Scriptures.

It is not to take up the theme of the circuit-rider

stories that I have recorded this incident, but to be reasonably truthful as I promised by admitting the motive that invariably determined my conduct in those days, in all the days of my married life. I was not nearly so concerned for the salvation of this first crop of penitents in my husband's ministry as I was for his peace. He himself was not the man to approve such a motive. But my own feeling is that I did a smart thing before my Lord by softening Lundy's Gospel in whispers around the altar; that probably the All-Seeing Eye regarded me with an appreciative twinkle at such times.

What I mean is that there is no great difference in the religion that binds us to God and the love that binds a man to his wife or a wife to her husband. This also is divine. Faith, loyalty, law, honor, duty, and every noble virtue by which we live in this world spring from these two relations. I venture to say that the bond which binds a devoted woman to her husband may be more productive of patience, courage, and sacrifice than the religious services required of her even by a jealous God. For, look you, she is never obliged to bear with her Heavenly Father, nor be anxious about what He is doing. She knows He bears with her, that He is faithful to perform His universe in her behalf and in the interest of all kinds of mankind.

But never yet lived a wife who knew that much about her husband in the little world they share together. Lundy, for example, was a good man and a devoted husband. Still, I used to worry now and then when he was out attending to his pastoral duties.

Not that I distrusted him, but the morbid feminine saint is the most unscrupulous moral phenomenon in the spiritual world. You cannot tell what she may do. Her sneaking little soul may lead her to confide the secret griefs of her life to her pastor with tears in her lovely eyes. And she is always gifted with sweet sorrows that crown her like a halo — whereas a real good woman never makes a declaration of her troubles, but digests them and goes on bravely about her business. This is hard on any kind of man, especially a preacher, obliged by his very calling to believe the best and not to suspect the worst of human nature. But I suppose the wives of other professional men, particularly doctors, know what I am talking about.

Still, the Lord undoubtedly meant it when He created us male and female with immortal powers of love and sacrifice toward each other that He did not bestow upon the other animal species. It is His way of providing a perpetual gymnastic exercise for the strengthening of our souls. Therefore I still believe in marriage for better or for worse. I know this is wrong, and that I ought to believe in divorce, and in this strong-minded modern woman who will have one on principle if she thinks she is entitled to it, as we used to live with our husbands to the bitter end on principle, no matter what kind of husbands they were. The effect may have been bad on society, although a home used to look like a house built upon good foundations that withstood the storms which beat upon it. Now somehow they remind us of a house built upon the sands. And it must be better to

bring your children up like illegitimates by divorcing their father if he is a disagreeable or improper person. Because then they are trained to a fiercer cock-fighting spirit against any little injustice they might otherwise endure in their own marriage estate.

When I read the propaganda these great modern women are putting out to establish divorce as a principle of our social life, I am moved by their arguments, and much more moved by the recital of women's woes they make to back up their contention. Still, it makes me nervous to prance around with them. I feel as I used to feel when we rode a certain circuit behind a kicking horse. Our lives may have been safe, but the dashboard of the buggy never was. Finally we gave up trying to keep a dashboard, which made us look reckless and queer when we arrived before the church door where Lundy was to preach that day. I used to sit up tense and silent during these drives.

Now the same kind of silence comes upon me when I fall in with the rapidly advanced women. If they knew what is going on in my mind, I should be more of a short circuit in the nation-wide conversation than I seem to be. Because all the time I am cross-questioning them in this silence. I am wondering if they are as good wives and mothers as we used to be, and whether their husbands are any more faithful to them. I am counting on my fingers how many of them are not married at all, which ones are contemplating getting a divorce. I am admitting that they are able, public-spirited women who are doing a shocking sight of good; but what I am mean and little enough

to want to know is, What kind of women are they in their homes? Do they have such a millstone as a home hung about their necks? Don't their husbands stay away more in the evenings than our husbands did? Aren't they gone themselves sometimes for weeks during a hard-fought campaign? Where are their citizen babes all this time? Is there anybody in the world who knows that they are sweet?

This last is a silly question. Still, if you are a woman, even the greatest, "sweet" is not such a bad adjective to own. It is a sort of title that no university can confer. Personally, I should feel strangely shy and long-legged if I arrived in heaven wearing a civitastic toga, carrying a copy of my divorce bill, and a press clipping to show what distinguished services I had rendered my country. It seems to me I should feel better dressed in the softer private virtues with a little old necktie of kindness crossed in front with a deed of love so small nobody ever heard of it. However, I may be punished there for this sly egotism so cunningly expressed in the terms of humility. Knowing the Lord as I do, it has frequently occurred to me that there will be much gentle punishment administered in heaven merely by way of adjusting the saints to each other. In that case let me be the celestial wing-keeper of, say, Carrie Chapman Catt, but preferably Anna Howard Shaw. The worst thing that could happen to me would be having to serve as cupbearer to a certain bishop, now long since passed away, who was unkind to Lundy.

In October of this first year I went home to mother, you may say for safe-keeping. I was a

grand young person in that house for the next three months. I do not remember being anxious about anything. Lundy traveled back and forth to his circuit on a little gray mare I used to ride when I was a girl. If he had any spiritual backsets during this splendid time, I knew nothing about it. Mother created the atmosphere of her home. It was a good, stout, religious atmosphere; but not highly sensitized, spiritually speaking. I have often wondered what would have happened if he had dared to lose the witness of the Spirit where she was. My belief is that she might have treated him as she used to treat father back in the years when he had a flare and lost his connections with the moral order. She was a person who set more store by the Ten Commandments than she did by the Beatitudes, eminently sensible, but not given to the spritual luxuries of the emotional pieties. I do not think she could ever have become the mother of a preacher. One thing she regarded as her Christian duty: That was the setting of a bountiful table. Lundy certainly was a well-nourished man at this time, which may have accounted for his purely human cheerfulness. We had lived upon the frugal diet of two impoverished saints for many months.

I am only inferring all this in the light of my later wisdom of life. What I remember is how serene and peaceful everything was. The bright, cold mornings, the frost on the grass, the leaves flying like golden feathers in the autumn wind. Huge, comfortable rocking-chairs — we had not been able to afford one — green wood fires that roared and crackled in the chimney. Nobody's soul to save, no meekness to

practice, no suppression of my honest human opinion because I was the pastor's wife. It was like coming home after a thousand years and finding everything very good, as the Lord used to say now and then in Genesis. My lid came off, dear brethren, and how I did talk and tell, as a soldier returns from the war and relates his adventures.

Can you see me impersonating the saints I had learned, not with any malice, but with the human wit of a fresh young mind? The way, for example, Sister Larkin would come waddling into the church, sit down voluminously, raise her turkey tail fan and wave it like a good old fat child of God cooling herself for the Gospel; the eclectic piety with which Brother Sells gave in his Christian experience at a love feast, and the snort Brother Sorrel let out because Sells had cheated him in a mule trade. When you consider how much all the people in all the churches discuss their pastor and his wife, it is only human reciprocity to let go now and then and say a few things about them. I may have fallen from grace for all I know; but if I did Lundy fell with me, because he kept a merry eye on these performances. And the wide, silent grin on father's face, and how mother laughed! I do hope this record I am writing of that time will come to her attention in heaven, for I was too young then in her blessings to be properly grateful to her.

On the morning of the twenty-third of December I was in high feather. I could not sit down and be quiet that day. There was a joyful wind in my boughs. I must help ice the Christmas cakes. I flew

about doing this, that, and the other, not aware of mother's following look of deep concern, but remembered now.

Late in the afternoon I was polishing the silver, rubbing every spoon very fast, and talking in a voice pitched high enough to trail off into laughter at nothing at all. Aunt Jane came up from her cabin with the air of one who has been sent for in a hurry. She regarded me with the awful wisdom of women.

"I think she should lie down now," mother said, referring to me.

"Let her t'ar round long as she kin. Hit's Nature working, not her," the old woman answered.

The cryptic remark passed over me. But I was reminded to ask Aunt Jane if she remembered the tale she used to tell me of the man who hauled sunshine to dry his house after a storm and how happy his wife was sweeping it about over the floor.

"Yes, honey," she answered gravely.

"Well, I am like that to-day," I told her.

Presently Aunt 'Liza popped in with the same hurried air of having been sent for. The three of them put their heads together and whispered. Aunt 'Liza, the plantation midwife, bobbing hers and wrinkling her little old black face into an expression of violent energy.

Almost at once there was the stealthy swiftness of women moving through the house. Lundy appeared and disappeared, acting in a strange, cowardly manner. I remember thinking maybe he was going to have one of his spells with the Holy Ghost. This was

practically the last I remembered until the next morning.

Our daughter, Faith, was born at midnight, in the kind old room where I had been born, and where I had learned to stand alone beside the candle-stand, and played dolls in the corner behind the bed, and suffered the A B C's of my early education. The same old clock on the mantel, telling the years, one tick at a time; the same pictures on the walls, and the same old heretic doctor who had attended my coming into the world. I shall never again feel so well and blessed and still as I felt in the gray light of that Christmas Eve morning. I seemed to be alone in this room with another life immortally kin to mine. For the first time Lundy passed entirely out of my thoughts. I was somebody else now. What I thought as soon as I was able to think was that Lundy would have to stay in his place now. A division had occurred. I would never belong heart and soul and body to him again. There was some one else nearer kin to me, with a closer claim upon me. Maybe this was not a thought, but a feeling like the awakening we have into another life.

After a long, peaceful time I perceived that this room was filled with watchers. The two old negro women were nodding like crumpled shadows in the chimney corner. Mother was sitting close beside me, with her hands folded; and suddenly the doctor was bending above me like a very dim old gray angel of the Lord. There are bound to be a few heretics in heaven, no matter what doctrinal provisions we make for their damnation!

He said something pleasant and asked me if I felt all right. I did, but there was not strength in me to proclaim the fact; whereupon mother let out a sob and covered it with a tearful smile.

How long I might have remained in this trance of peace and silence, if I had not suddenly discovered that the child for whom I had so nearly given my life was not with me, I do not know. For through no more than the habit of consciousness I had supposed she was there beside me.

"Where is she?" I demanded.

Whereupon the doctor rubbed his hands together in a gratified way as if at last I showed the proper intention of surviving; and mother looked pleased, and everybody began to stir about softly. Mother said the baby was with her father in the next room, and hurried off to fetch them.

So Faith met her father first in this life. I heard afterwards that this meeting was characterized with marked indifference on her part and curiosity equally marked on his. Mother said he held her under the lamplight and stared at her and that she bore this scrutiny unflinchingly. I have understood that this unseemly curiosity is characteristic of fathers. But why do they stare in this manner at their newborn children? Are they trying to feel kin to them, or is it merely the age-old masculine instinct poking about in primordial doubt? Anyhow, no woman likes it.

I am bound to admit that Faith was not much of a daughter at this time. She was the tiniest of pink babies, with only one sense, that of being at home

in my arms. She turned to me with intimate assurance.

Then I saw it, low down on the curve of her small cheek, a cherry blossom, life size, each petal white and distinct in her rosy skin! A memory printed there of that terrible night in May when I had waited and feared for Lundy, sitting beside the window, with the moonlight making a bridal veil of the blooming cherry tree outside. If such a thing can happen to the mere flesh, what does happen to the minds and spirits of unborn children?

I know one thing: Faith was like the thoughts I had of her father so long as she lived. She was apt at goodness. She had quality, a fine sweet air, that queer pride of very proud people that vaunteth not itself. She was gifted with an upright mind and a sort of tender gayety; all exactly as her father might have been if the shadow of the Lord had not fallen upon him. She might have been different if I had not believed so passionately in the man he really was beneath this shadow.

Long afterwards, when she became the rose upon my breast and the crown upon my head, I used to think about this as you do about some article of your own personal creed. My belief is that the children we bear, whatever their physical resemblance may be, are the images mentally we keep in our minds of their fathers. So it is best to know the best of one's husband, and not to dare doubtful thoughts of him lest we commit a breach of faith to this life of him to come. This is why I have my anxieties about posterity born of modern feminist mothers. They have ac-

quired too much regrettable rational information about men, which is not the way to know or understand men at all.

As Faith's skin changed to jasmine fairness the cherry blossom disappeared. But to the day of her death thirty years later whenever her cheeks were flushed, it bloomed there, white against the rose.

After all, her coming did not divorce my love. There was not enough of the woman I had been to fulfill this double relation. I was obliged to remain wholly the wife of my husband, and Faith must have a whole mother to herself. I became two women, separate and distinct in one body. If I had had five children, I must have multiplied into five mothers and one wife.

I could not change Lundy's God. He had mixed the fatalism of the Greeks with his Christian faith. The inevitable results were periods of melancholia. Heaven knows how many times I had to drop everything and change into a spiritual whirlwind to save him from this despair. When you consider that I was no philosopher, nor even an erudite person, and disposed to be tenaciously human in the exercise of my religious faith, you will understand how often the Lord was with me in this business.

But I was determined Faith should have no such God as this. If it was the last thing I ever did, she should inherit the normal distant sky-line God of my family. I did my best to make her a spunky little human first. The Lord for a long time was no more than the bright roof over her happy head. What I mean is that while I was trying to live up to Lundy's

God and keep his light trimmed and burning, I was pursuing another spiritual footpath altogether with little Faith, where we enjoyed many cheerful blessings in a normal way without discussing divine sources.

Lundy was sent to a station the next year.

The religious scenery of my mind I believe is laid in the open, upon the hills and in the valleys of time and space; in dim little country churches at the end of long dusty roads across which the shadows fall. I have tried saying my prayers in Saint Peter's at Rome, and in many other of the great cathedrals of the Old World; but they never seemed to get beyond the incense atmosphere of these places. I reckon it was because my acquaintance with the Almighty began in the garden at home with mother, and was associated in my mind with the things He had made — the earth and the sky, the flowers that bloomed, the winds that blew through the happy bright days of my youth. Anyhow, no matter how grand and reverent is the architecture of a temple that men have built, it does not aid the knees of my faith to rise and stand upright before the Lord as do the lofty domes of His own temple, which takes in everything.

So I do not seem to have had any vital relation to Lundy's church or congregation in this town, which was a suburb of a big city. The noise of the world was too close by. Besides, I was very much engaged with the baby. Even at night I was never quite asleep lest something should happen to her. The suspicions and fierce devotion of an animal to its young

is nothing to that of a human mother to her child; not sensible, but instinctive. One might suppose it is derived from the same source, the experiences of the first mothers who some tens of thousands of years ago guarded their prehistoric offspring in the back end of a cave. But this theory will not do, because the women of to-day who most nearly resemble these original mothers in their lack of wisdom and faith leave their infants to a bottle and a nurse.

The one incident that stands out vividly in my recollections of this year was the first hand-to-hand conflict with Lundy.

I had promised to obey him when we were married, but I do not remember ever having deliberately done so. When you are really a wife, you are like the right hand and the left hand of your husband, which naturally perform the will of the brain back of them. Thus I lived his will so shrewdly that it was no trouble at all to guide his kind heart to the accomplishment more particularly of my wishes. I doubt if he ever had the least idea that he was being imposed upon.

Everything went well with us until our mutual instincts became involved on a sort of cat fight over the baby. Look into it and you will find that most of the disturbances between husband and wife have their origin in some conflict between their instincts. She is offended when he litters the house because she has something else laid up against him, and he growls about the food or any little thing because banked in him are the fires of wrath about a totally different matter.

Faith fell desperately ill late in the summer. Days and nights passed when her life hung by a thread as we used to say. I could not bear to leave her for a moment. I lost my appetite and even the desire to rest or sleep. I was no more than the shadow of myself. I located Lundy as the father of this child, as the Methodist Church located a preacher when he is no longer fit for pastoral service. He was not allowed to share in the struggle I was making for her life.

Finally one night I was sitting beside the crib, watching the fevered little creature whimpering and moving her head restlessly upon the pillow. Lundy came in and stood beside me. But I did not see him. I had scarcely recognized his existence for days. He told me to go out and get some rest; he would take care of the baby.

"The doctor has been here. He does not think she will live. I can't leave her," I answered woefully.

"But you must have some sleep," he insisted.

"You do not know what it is to be a mother," I returned tearfully.

He entreated me gently to leave him with the child. I let him know briefly that this was the mother's place, and it showed how little he knew about a baby, especially a sick baby, to dare to think he could fill it. Followed a silence about as long as would be required to wind up the mainspring of a man's will.

"Do you realize that I am the father of this child?" he demanded coolly.

I merely stared at him. This was no time to

discuss the question of paternity, much less boast about it.

"And that you are depriving me of my rights?" he went on, lifting his voice.

"You are disturbing her," I whispered, waving the back of my hand at him as much as to say, "Be gone!"

Suddenly he seized me — my husband seized me, you understand — as if I had been a whisk-broom, or something light and trivial in his life as a feather. I had scarcely time to catch my breath before he strode across the hall and deposited me with more emphasis than firmness upon the company bed.

"Now stay there!" he commanded, stalked out, and turned the key in the lock, thus making it impossible for me to do anything else.

I remember lying upon this bed like an exclamation of indignation and anguish at being separated from the baby at such a time as this. And I remembered nothing else until the next morning, when the key turning in the lock aroused me from deep sleep.

"She has rested and is much better. You may get up now," he said, just like that, in a matter-of-fact voice, as much as to say he was a father and was too much occupied as such to kiss his wife.

I felt the omission like a deserved reproach, since the baby really was much better; and in a spirit of curious meekness I shared my vigils with him after that. Also, from this time forth I had the privilege of walking much more softly before Lundy than I had ever done before. I seemed to know him better as a man; and if you want to know the truth, I had some

sort of wary wifely respect for him that one never has for the saint she may have married.

The next year Lundy was sent to a church in a large country town. I was growing a bit dim by this time, because we had less money in proportion to our needs; and I was very busy doing everything, taking care of the baby and keeping the parsonage up to the standard set by the Parsonage Aid Society, which was an argus-eyed society.

There was one woman among them who goaded me to distraction. She would come in with, say, a can of preserved tomatoes, which not even a Methodist preacher's family finds palatable. In return for this gift she would look over the house. She had a sort of snooping eye that invariably dwelt upon the litter of toys surrounding Faith on the parsonage sheepskin. She was a homely woman, with the most beautiful wealth of auburn hair I have ever seen. I used to sit behind her in church and be compelled to admire it in spite of the way I felt toward her.

These were days when infants were still allowed to attend divine services in their mothers' arms everywhere, except probably in the smart city churches. I used to take Faith to the Wednesday-night prayer meetings. She was at the jumping, dancing age; but a silent, observant little thing in the house of prayer.

One night at the end of the service Lundy said, "Let us pray," as usual. I bowed my head and closed my eyes, holding Faith, who seemed to be bending over the back of the bench in front of us. Presently I felt her fat little body stiffen as with a mighty effort. At the same moment I heard a scuf-

fing, rustling sound accompanied by a low moan of anguish, not spiritual but physical. I sat up just in time to see Faith rear back with the hat and all the beautiful auburn hair of that woman dangling from her hands. She was regarding it ecstatically.

I cast one horrified look at the thin, gray-haired victim still kneeling in the next pew, who returned the look with such fury as I have never seen on the face of any kneeling figure. Then I snatched her hair and hat from Faith, clapped them back upon her head just as Lundy said "Amen!" And Faith let out a screech of rage similar to that of any young animal of the carnivorous breed that has just been deprived of its prey.

I was never one to make an excuse of Providence to rejoice in some accidental retribution suffered by an enemy. But it was an apt thing for the child to do, and saved me from further inspection of the parsonage.

This year ended for a long time Lundy's active career in the Methodist ministry. He was made adjunct teacher of Greek in Emory College, and took up his duties there the following year. But along with four other members of the faculty, he continued to preach in the college chapel one Sunday in every month for the next ten years. This period is not covered in the circuit-rider stories, a fact that inspired much criticism at one time among those who felt that the author of these stories had given more credit to William Thompson than he deserved, seeing that he was not actually in the itineracy during this period. The truth is that I failed to

give enough credit to this wonderful man who never ceased to be the pastor of souls, and who failed to shine in those chronicles as the learned and distinguished scholar that he really was. Besides, if one year of any circuit-rider's life should be fully written, it would require more volumes to tell it than Kitto's famous collection of Commentaries contained.

IV

LUNDY was to begin his duties as adjunct professor of Greek in Emory College at the beginning of the fall term. This was and still is an institution controlled by the Methodist Church. We moved to Oxford late in the summer of that year. Our entire wealth at this time consisted of the baby, twelve quilts, enough sheets and pillow-cases to lay us out in case of death, the old tin box of sermons handed down from three generations of preachers, and two wagonloads of books.

We took up our residence in the Allen house. It was like renting the Twenty-Third Psalm to live in. A kind old house, formerly painted white, weathered gray, with motherly wings to it like spreading skirts. It was roomy and sweet and plain like a good woman's heart, and it had been sanctified by the lives and prayers of the Allen family, which is a family historic for its piety and services to the Methodist Church. You know; not great people, but good people. There was a picket fence in front and a good little gate; a short walk from the low porch, which looked like an old lady's sunbonnet, to the gate. This walk had a border of thrift, if you know what I mean — a low, thick, homely little flower with pale lavender blossoms. On either side there was a thicket of blooming shrubs, everything you wanted from forsythia and burning bush to roses and lilacs, besides neat little flower-beds bordered with violets

and filled indiscriminately with all the lovely fragrant flowers of early spring, like hyacinths, jonquils, lilies, and dewdrops.

It was the kind of flower garden women used to make according to their feelings, not according to rules or perspectives and artistic sensibilities. If somebody gave you a bulb or a rose cutting, you hurried home and stuck it in the ground where it would get the sun or the shade, according to the nature of that plant, but without the least regard to whether its position conformed to the tyranny of the artistic eye or not. If you know how to interpret such a garden, it becomes the blooming picture of the heart of a woman who loves the happiness and prosperity of these flowers. This is especially true if you see a little pile of sticks and brush covering some spot like Nature's dead whiskers. There was just such a bed in the garden before this house, and the next summer it was a flaming glory of gladiolus, like the flags of all nations.

When I look back through the years at this time or that, I wonder if I knew then how near and kind the Lord was to us, or if I was worrying so to make our worldly and spiritual ends meet that I was blind to His mercies. For example, I cannot recall now how we furnished this house. We could not have done it with only the baby, the quilts, and a change of towels and bed linen, because, for one thing, we had no bed. The parsonages we had occupied were furnished. We certainly had no money, and we were never in debt. I have searched every crack and corner of my recollections in vain to find some record of

how we furnished this house. Neither have I any memory of angels bringing in chairs, bureaus, and bedsteads. Yet we had all these things, and even a frightful pair of portière curtains, maroon-colored, with hideous yellow figures in them; which is a suspicious circumstance, because, if I had purchased portières during this period of my savage, glittering mind, they would have been red-and-gold imitation of opulence. If all these things were stolen, I did it; but I have no recollection of being a thief, except later when I began to write books and used to steal an occasional fine sentence from Lundy and put it into these books as if it was my own.

I may have commandeered this furniture from somewhere. There is no telling. I was a ruthless young thing in those days, determined to get whatever we needed for peace and happiness. In that case there would be no scar on my conscience to indicate the sin I committed in this emergency. I remember being anxious and excited about getting our best foot foremost. It was no small adventure to move into a college town with no more than your baby and your quilts with which to keep up appearances. I could not now be nearly so impressed with a mansion on Park Avenue in New York and seven invitations to dine with the denizens of that neighborhood as I was then with this change in our worldly fortunes.

Lundy would be a member of the faculty and I would be one of that august body of women connected with this faculty by blood or marriage. Something must be done; and though I have no rec-

ollection of getting the house cleaned or furnished, I distinctly recall working frantically with some lace ripped from my wedding frock to make a jabot to wear on the front of my best dress. How I looked in this frilly thing I do not know; I recall only the frisky feeling I had of being released, a sort of airy sensation after my plain years in the itineracy. It touches me to think of how I was then. I must have had a little of the sweetness and charm that make other women dear and attractive.

But if we were short on worldly goods and pomp when we came to Oxford, we were not lacking in literature. There were many boxes of Greek grammars, histories, lexicons, and other Greek books of one sort and another, left over from those years before I knew him, when Lundy had held this same chair at Emory College. His collection of religious literature was also considerable, having been inherited from a long line of preachers; and was composed, you may say, of the three succeeding grades of theology, according to the times in which they lived and preached the Word — the early hell-fire, the doctrinal and the evangelical.

I have always avoided religious books, not exactly on principle, but from some strong spiritual instinct not to impair my own soul's relations to its own God. And I was particularly averse to Kitto's Commentaries, in Lundy's library. This was due to the fact that whenever he consulted these commentaries while he was preparing a sermon, that sermon was sure to be a scorcher. We would be left hair-hung and breeze-shaken over the hot pit of perdition,

which is no place to leave a congregation. Even the tenderest benediction is not comforting at the end of such a service.

We had a great time arranging these books in the shelves of that room to be set aside as the library. The huge lexicons and other volumes, printed in the fine cross-stitch letters of the Greeks, together with the thick old commentaries and so many other religious works, produced a grave and weighty impression of our mental insides. We were still a bit furtive about our worldly mind, for I remember how the whole collection trailed off into poetry and novels in the darker corners.

At the sight of so much wealth, Lundy became egotistical. He would fill a section of shelves and then vaunt himself, thrust his hands in his pockets and strut up and down. He would swagger up to a certain shelf, nose the books there, choose one, open it, give it a cursory glance, and replace it; practicing, you understand, the manners of a gentleman and a scholar among his books. Some men rattle the coins in their pockets or swift about in their limousines. It all comes from the same instinct to display what we have. Lundy showed off before the gallery in his own mind and before me, sitting on the floor among the dusty volumes yet to be arranged.

"Now I shall have time to prepare that Greek grammar I have always had in mind," he said, halting before me in the swayback attitude of a man with an idea.

Can you see me looking up at him with so much pride and such relief? His exalted manner and this

announcement seemed to remove us from the Holy Ghost austerity of our former life in the Gospels. If he wrote this grammar, he would not require the constant witness of the Spirit so essential in the preparation of sermons. We should probably rest now from wrestling with the Lord. Also, my husband was even now by way of becoming a distinguished man in this present world. How often in the years to come did he announce some book he meant to write! Shortly before his death he planned "The Life of Jesus, By a Sinner." But to the last his powers to achieve were mortgaged to some terrible fate.

I must set in a picture here of Oxford as it was in those days, or this was the Eden of all my years and where the mind I have now was created.

If you have been there you know what it is — a small country town composed of very large white houses beneath a vast umbrella of oak trees. A street car drawn by two little mouse-colored mules connected it with the railway station and the next town, two miles distant. They wore bells, those mules, and on summer mornings the tinkling music they made was mingled with the songs of birds, the wind in the trees, the college tower clock striking the hour, and the sound on the pavements of many feet of students passing back and forth from their classes.

The campus was at one end, upon which stood a group of modest buildings devoted to the industry of culture. The cemetery was at the other end; a good, quiet place to rest when your whole day's work was done. A great many celebrated men are buried there beneath tall monuments, but not one cele-

brated woman so far as I know. In those days this dutiful sex did not go in for fame; nothing that could disorder the script upon their lesser tombs. You might stand afar off and count the men by the height of their monuments; but you could not see all the tombs or the women, because some of them were so low and humble that they might not be visible in the tall grass that loves such tombs. There was one group that used to interest me, not only because the patriarch buried there was a relative of my husband; but because he seemed to be surrounded by what you may call a saintly harem. Four wives he had in all. The first one had a very creditably tall tombstone, the second was a trifle shorter, the third was very low. But the fourth had a monument of high degree. It topped the patriarch's by an inch or so. She had survived him, you understand, and no doubt learned a lesson from the markers set up to his three earlier wives.

This was the only impudent feminine relation to be seen there. You could infer that they were all the graves of gentlewomen, because the inscriptions were practically the same — "—— Loving, Faithful Wife of So-and-So." I doubt if you could find more virtuous dust anywhere in this world than in such graves as these. But I reckon we shall be demanding taller monuments now, with more of our titles and deeds written on them.

I heard of a famous woman not long ago who had a terrific mythological group set up over her. The figure of a woman with her hand resting upon the head of a peacock — tail in repose; a wild boar rushing

around one side of her, a lion for her footstool, and a serpent gracefully coiled in the foreground. It is expensive, I admit that; and if you understand the symbolism of the thing, it is complimentary to her; but many people will interpret that monument by ear, so to speak, and it will not be so very complimentary, but probably witty at the expense of the great lady. When I come back to be laid forever beside my husband in this cemetery at Oxford, I should prefer just a flat slab over me like a white counterpane, with that part about having been a loving and faithful wife inscribed upon it with the two dates that used to accompany good women to their hereafters, when I was born and when I passed away. Anybody can understand an inscription like that. It is too simple and scriptural for your wit to monkey with it. What I mean is, we ought to play safe in the grave, because, after all, our dust may hear what is said above it.

Between the cemetery and the college campus the citizens of Oxford lived and the students boarded. This was why the homes of the town had been built for huge families. For nine months in the year most of us had enormous families composed of these young men who were preparing to enter the world or the ministry with a bachelor's degree of one sort or another. They came and went like swift shadows, but the citizens remained.

When a different generation of youths passes through the scenes of your life every four years, the dust and noise it makes in transit has its effects upon your mind and character. You are constantly under

the strain of holding fast to your poor old indignant integrity against the odds of youth. I suppose this is why college communities are the oldest, most patient, and the most righteously cynical people in the world. The very girls of it get to be widows before they are twenty without ever having been married, because they have had so many lovers who passed on without being deceased.

In Oxford we lived in a state of outraged piety on account of what the students had done to us or the town, or Few's monument on the campus the night before. We were the butt of every joke they could perpetrate. We had to be temperate in everything except our tempers and our tongues, because young men who drank were expelled from the college. The W.C.T.U. was a fiercely strong organization. I remember a certain meeting we had in which some of the students were invited to take part. A pale, sweet girl recited a poem, the refrain of which was, "Lips that touch wine shall never touch mine."

When she sat down, a tall, red-headed young student was called upon to speak. It was expected that he would make a manly response to the sentiment just expressed by the young lady. He stood up, folded his hands low down in front of him with an agonized twisting of his fingers, bowed his head, shook it sadly, heaved his breast as if strong emotions gripped him, and remained silent so long that some of us were moved to tears. We thought he might be a secret drunkard brought to repentance. Finally he seemed to get command of himself. He lifted his head, swept the feminine part of the audi-

ence with a look of proud virtue often tried, and exclaimed in a firm voice:

"I can say with the poet, 'Lips that touch wine shall never touch mine,'" and sat down.

We endured much of a similar nature from these youngsters, who were in that mischievous period of masculine adolescence. We were obliged to love them and bear with them for Jesus' sake, and frequently said so; but we often hated them cordially from our own human sense of outraged justice. The result was warped characters that made us queer.

I could write an album of pictures of us in those days. The old bachelor and his two spinster sisters who lived in a tall white house. He was a lawyer by profession and a poet by intention; also an author. He wrote a novel of the Civil War which was a feat in American literature that has never been surpassed. He mounted all his characters in the first chapter on horseback and kept them riding hard to the end of the story, which covered five years. It seems that he himself had belonged to a cavalry regiment and knew by experience how long a man could keep in the saddle. His sisters had never changed the style of their dress since the Civil War. The eldest wore an iron-gray curl down her back, with the remainder of her hair tucked up. The other wore all her curls down, at the age of sixty.

This old gentleman called on us every Sunday afternoon for ten years. He was devoted to little Faith. On Christmas Eve night he would appear at the Santa Claus hour, bringing a small sawdust doll with a china head that had been dressed ante-bellum

style from some scrap of his sisters' pre-war frocks. He had a good, kind, homely face; but I shall never forget the villainous look he used to have, bending over Faith's bulging stocking hung beside the fireplace. He would be hunched up, knees bent, on tiptoes, casting a wary eye at her asleep in the crib as he stuffed that doll in the top of the stocking, gave it a welcoming tilt forward with outstretched arms, and spread the voluminous skirts till they stood out like a tiny yellow balloon figured with roses. Then he craved the favor of being present the next morning when the child should awaken and find her stocking. So we had to be ready to let him in at daybreak, in time to see Faith whisk out of bed in her nightie and fly to her treasures. What a scene! Shrieks of joy, Faith dancing with the doll in one hand and holding fast to the old colonel's hand with the other. He is gone long since; and the sisters, both laid away in their fine 1858 party frocks. What quaint figures they must make in heaven if there are wings to correspond to our earthly fashions! If there are any small angels there, the old colonel will be in his glory no matter how dim a crown he wears.

The Oxford shoemaker literally made shoes and was a philosopher with a spark of wit. I remember what he said about Father Branham's shoes. Father Branham was a very old Methodist preacher, retired many years ago, a kind saint who would come and have prayers with you as if he were still your pastor. Maybe he had walked too much on his Lord's business; anyhow, his feet were bad. The shoemaker said the soles of his shoes inside resem-

bled a map of the Rocky Mountains, so many places must be hollowed out to fit his calluses.

In the very heart of the town lived an old man who took his bed for twenty years because the world did not appreciate him. He said he was "a bright star revolving in the dust," pulled the covers over his head and let it go at that.

In a fine old white house the son of a famous scientist lived with his numerous family and his boarders. I do not remember that this man ever did anything or said anything or made the least impression on the community until one day he wrote a poem — a good one, you understand, with notes in it as sweet and high as a lark's song. Then he fared forth and put the rest of us in our places, which was in the rear. Never from that day did he notice any man. He was exalted. I always thought it was strange that he wrote no more poetry, because the thing he had done was his own and attracted favorable comment when it was published in one of the best magazines.

Somewhere in one of the circuit-rider stories there is a sort of interpretation of Doctor Ed. He lived in Oxford now and then, white and shriven by his one sin of intemperance. He was a brilliant and successful physician at times. His great gift, however, was his instinct of peace and good-will to men. He made no distinction between the good and the bad. I suppose he forgave more saints on account of their harsh criticisms of him than the Lord himself could countenance. When one of us would be dying, Doctor Ed was always called in, not to consult about our case; but his office would be to tell us, prepare us for

the cold chill of death, because he could pass you on to your Lord with no jarring of your mortal nerves. He seemed to stand like heavenly medicine between you and the last wild terrors of life when you were too weak and hurried to bear them. He was ill a long time before his own release came, and bore his suffering with a strange patience, as if this pain might be his atonement. He wished for eternal life, but I doubt if he expected it to be pleasant. His entrance into heaven must have been a great surprise to him. Sometimes now when I think of him I cannot help hoping the waters of the River of Life may be mildly stimulating.

We had our middle-aged meddlers and a few cloven-hoofed saints. I remember one. He was always calling down the vials of wrath upon somebody. I do not know if you have observed this fact: very few men, even the worst, ever speak critically of God; but a good many of us call upon Him to curse somebody else. This old man belonged to that class. He prayed earnestly for the punishment of the wicked. The queer thing was that he died happy in the assurance of his own salvation. If he ever meets Doctor Ed in paradise, there will be something doing, or I am no judge of spiritual bodies that have been delivered from the flesh that led them into temptation.

I am skipping many pictures in this Oxford album, but there are two old faces that must shine here. They had been married a long time. You had the feeling that even death could not part them. They lived near the campus, and were different from the

rest of us, because they never talked about anybody. For all they knew, the earth represented the fullness of the Lord, and the world of men was a good one. He had a fine, keen eye in his old withered face and always went about one-sided, with his elbow crooked from having walked so much with his little old wife clinging to his arm. She had a heavy iron-gray mustache, I remember, and the kindest expression. These two people never went about doing good, but goodness emanated from them as light flows from two elderly stars on a dark night.

I must not forget Mr. George, who had been blind from his youth and who was the best farmer in that section. I suppose he was the only living man who knew every step of the streets, roads, and fields about Oxford by heart. He went everywhere alone, popping his cane on the ground in front of him, testing the depth of the ploughing, and measuring the growth of his corn and cotton with this stick. He was always cheerful and asked no favors, although he might have commanded the eyesight of everybody in town.

Finally there was Brother Lonyers's dog. Lonyers was the official drayman of the town, but his little dog was a prominent citizen. He was not only a volunteer member of the town council every time it met; he was a faithful attendant upon all church services, and used to sneak up to sit among the trustees of the college during commencement exercises. Never shall I forget the night a gangling, red-headed sophmore strode upon the rostrum to declaim "The Convict's Dream." His voice was melancholy, his

gestures woeful. The little dog, curled under the chair of a trustee seated at the back of the stage, heard and was moved. He uncurled, pricked his ear, listened, caught sight of the speaker. Ah, here was a man in pain and needing sympathy! He crept forth, tail between his legs, sat down a short distance behind the declaimer, watched him a moment, then keened his nose and let out a piercing, long-drawn howl. Never did a dreamer have a ruder awakening. He leaped violently into the air, shot one glance behind him, and fled. This was the most realistic performance I ever witnessed on the stage.

Oxford had a spiritual mania for prayer meetings. The whole town steamed with religious fervor. Even the students were affected. Still, we produced a normal amount of human heinousness. I have no idea of the impression I produced upon this community. Now and then some one who has not seen me since those old days appears and begins to tell me something I did or said that does not sound like me, and is rarely ever so complimentary as the thoughts I can think of myself. But let that go. I confess to being a trifle remiss in attendance upon the prayer meetings. I was at last a free moral agent and desired to exercise this liberty.

What I remember most vividly is Lundy pacing back and forth in his library or behind the house in the cow pasture, memorizing his Greek text for the next day. He would never use a book in the classroom. Ten years after he had resigned this professorship in Emory College and had given up the study of Greek, he lay in a hospital delirious with fever,

chanting page after page of Homer's Iliad. Give him an anæsthetic for no more than the extracting of a tooth and he was immediately changed to a joyful pagan, with all the poetry of the ancient Greeks on the tip of his tongue. Not a word about his Lord and Saviour; not a prayer; but the roll and rumble of this great poetry. But let him come to his right senses and he was at once concerned for some gift from his Jehovah God.

He became a great preacher at Oxford. I do not know how this was, because I still have those sermons; but when I read them they are strangely ponderous, not at all like the winged and sublime discourses he made them by delivery. He always memorized these too. He could commit to memory in an hour a sermon that would require thirty minutes to deliver. This was an amazing performance. He would lay the pages down somewhere and pace them off, so to speak, step sedately back and forth, head thrown back, face lifted as if at a time like this he preferred to look his Maker squarely in the heavens. Not a word escaped his lips, not a gesture. Presently it would be done. Then he would retire to pray, which was a far more anxious business.

We were happy in Oxford because he was too much divided between his Greek and his religion to concentrate as formerly upon the Holy Ghost. Maybe he did not feel so much the burden of souls. His conscience took another turn, that of imbuing brand-new American youths with a love and knowledge of Greek. There is many a man in the South to-day who knows he did it.

The years passed. Faith grew more and more into the likeness and image of her father. The relation between them was intimate. She had a large mind for adventure. For example, having heard of lions she desired to hunt these beasts. For some strange reason Lundy was not hidebound in his veracity to this child. He went so far as to take her lion hunting. I can see her maybe four years old, wearing a red hood and coat, going off with him one winter afternoon on this thrilling expedition. He carried her in one arm and his gun on the other shoulder. I brought up the rear, being no more than dragoman of this expedition. We came to the edge of the town where there was a shallow brook running across the road into a dense wood.

Suddenly Lundy set Faith upon her feet in the road, assumed a sneaking pose, cocked his gun, cut his eye at her, and said, "Hist!"

Faith clasped her hands and histed with ecstasy.

"Do you see the lion, daddy?" she whispered, face lifted, eyes on him in whom she placed all her trust.

"I smell him!" he muttered savagely.

She perked up her nose and sniffed. Yes, she smelt a lion!

Meanwhile, he was creeping nearer the beast with such exaggerated genuflections that I grew weak with silent laughter. No fear on the part of Faith. Her father was omnipotent. No lion could touch him.

Suddenly there was a loud report, a blinding flash, and Faith's father in hot pursuit of the wounded lion. "Bang! Bang!" went the gun again as he disappeared in the forest.

Faith merely turned very red with courage and would have followed if I had not held her back from the shallow stream. I wondered how her father would face her without so much as the tail of this lion. But he knew the quality of his child better than I did.

Presently he appeared upon the edge of the woods, walking rapidly toward us with the air of a victorious Nimrod, but minus the carcass. Faith did not observe this omission. She tattooed with her feet upon the frozen ground and smacked her hands.

"I shot him, Faith! He will die later!" he shouted.

She was satisfied with this explanation. What she wanted, I believe, was not the lion, but to know that her father could kill one anywhere if he chose to do so.

For a time he had full possession of Faith, and I must say that he was more of a Greek than a father in his relations to her. When she was five years old, she could recite the twelve labors of Hercules with astonishing histrionic effect, and she could print in straggling letters the first Latin declension on the floor with matches. He read a huge biography of Napoleon Bonaparte to her before she was six years old. She was so much excited by Napoleon's campaign in Egypt that she would get up in her sleep, stand upon her pillow, and shout, "Asses and savants to the center!" You will recall that all the wise men and donkeys were ordered to the center of Napoleon's famous hollow-square formations when the enemy was about to attack.

This was too much, and I was obliged to rescue her from her father's intellectual clutch. But there was no way of making an ordinary child of her. She invariably changed my wisdom to mockery, not intentionally, but with a sort of merry originality that was characteristic of her.

It may be that her father considered a man's and a priest's religion too stern for her. In any case, I was allowed to conduct her spiritual education. I did this in secret, much as I prayed certain confidences to the Lord about Lundy. I was careful to call her attention to how much her Heavenly Father had done for her, what tremendous provisions He had made for our peace and happiness. Therefore, I explained, it was grasping and ungrateful to be always nagging and praying to Him for something else; that this was a frightful fault of Christian people. She must always pray to Him cheerfully and thankfully, but never to demean herself by becoming a sniveling beggar on her knees to God. And by way of illustration I used to get down on my knees occasionally when Lundy was nowhere about and pray a cheerful, happy prayer, with Faith squatting beside me and peeping through her fingers at me.

All went well until a certain night when she fairly lifted the hair on her father's head with one of these communions with the Lord. She was ready for bed, a small figure in a long white gown, and her hair plaited in two thin pigtails. She whisked back and knelt as usual beside her bed. Presently we heard the most entrancing giggles, and we could see Faith fairly wriggling with merriment through this prayer.

Lundy strode across the room and stood staring down at her in the wildest moral confusion. You dare not interrupt even an infant's prayer, but the moment she stood up, he caught her in his arms like a little white brand he had snatched from burning.

"Faith, what were you doing?" he demanded sternly.

"I was thess telling the Lord a little joke," she answered, still smiling.

Well, she had to learn the Lord's Prayer then and there! I reckon this was all right. Still, I cannot think the Lord could have been displeased with her little joke when you consider how many thousands of years the prayer-bearing angels have had nothing so cheerful to deliver.

She started to school when she was ten years old. She wore pretty little frocks and a white Mother Goose bonnet with an embroidery frill around it, and she switched in the most exaggerated manner when she walked. This would be when she was going in the morning. When she returned in the afternoon she was frequently a scarred veteran. She had the appearance of a dainty girl child, but in this village school she proved to have the nature and fists of a boy. Once she came home stepping proudly with a scalp wound, and the same afternoon a little boy went home to his mother sadly disfigured from having been severely handled face downward on the frozen ground. She had staged the Battle of Waterloo during the noon recess. The little boy insisted upon being Napoleon Bonaparte. Very well, she would be the Duke of Wellington, Faith agreed.

From all accounts this was a drawn battle, with both the French and British armies drawn from the sixth grade, to which the two generals belonged in school. But the boy claimed the victory because he said Napoleon conquered Europe. Faith flew into the schoolroom, flung open the unabridged dictionary to the biographical supplement and proved to him in black and white that the Duke of Wellington not only won the Battle of Waterloo, but that Napoleon had been seized and banished to the Isle of St. Helena. It was while she was endeavoring single-handed to carry out this last historical detail that she received the scalp wound, and he had suffered similar open-faced abrasions rather than be rolled by a girl into an adjacent briar patch.

I do not know how this happened, but she would fight for the dropping of a hat during her childhood. My belief is that she was the true Tartar descendant of her father. Lundy had a secret taste for war. But his conscience restrained him. If it had not been for the Lord he would have settled more than one score like a man instead of a Christian. Even with this handicap, I rejoice to record that a certain bishop did once back out of his presence without taking the time to turn around.

As she grew older, Faith began to show qualities that she could not have inherited from such a father; a certain moral expertness in turning her corners in life neatly. What I mean is that it was difficult to overtake her in a fault. She was obedient and reverent, but if either one of us pushed her too close she would turn upon us with the bright sword

of her tongue. For example, she was intelligent, not mechanical mentally. She reached her conclusions by unerring flights of inspiration. Therefore she was not good in mathematics, which is a penguin science. Partial payments, at the age of twelve, were beyond her comprehension. She adopted the simple expedient of copying the answers to these problems from the back of her arithmetic.

Her father discovered this sin and accused her. I can see her, sitting primly in the edge of an adult chair beside his desk, her blue eyes peacefully level with his, lips pressed to a proud, firm line, enough color in her cheeks to show the cherry blossom, listening faultlessly while he lectured her upon the sin of dishonesty.

"Now," he concluded, "what have you to say for yourself?"

She folded her hands and drooped.

"Well, of course, I did it," she sighed.

Then before he could get in the first sentence of his atonement Gospel, her little face crumpled like a rose in a rainstorm. Tears streamed, she keened her nose to the ceiling, and wailed, "And, oh, how terrible it must be to be the father of a child who cheats!"

He was shot to pieces. He gathered her into his arms. Never have I heard a good man fling righteousness to the wind so quickly. He perjured himself with eloquence and tenderness. What she had done was not so bad. He had himself copied whole examples when he was her age. He distinctly re-

membered looking in his spelling book when the teacher gave out the word "Constantinople." Practically all children did such things until they learned not to do them. He was proud to be her father. Oh, yes, he preferred it to any honor the world could bestow upon him. She was his crown and his supplement, and so on and so forth.

She could always turn him over like that, either by attacking him under the fifth rib where his affections made him vulnerable, or with some side-stepping of her feminine wit. At least she inherited her sex from me, and a certain shrewd evasion of the he law of righteousness. I remember something Lundy said to me once when I was endeavoring to lead him out of his darkness by accounting in a purely normal way for some transgression he had committed.

"My dear," he exclaimed dolorously, "it will require all the legal talent in heaven to convict you of your sins!"

I could write an anthology of the child Faith was then. Of how she wept and rejoiced over the adventures of Christian when her father read Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" aloud to her. Of how earnestly she asked the privilege of punishing herself for a fib she had told. And when she had striped her chubby bare legs with the switch, the gallant way she looked up and wanted to know if I thought that was enough punishment. I left it entirely to her own conscience.

"Well, maybe I had better switch me some more then," she decided, and did it.

Of the apples she used to steal and give to the

students who passed by. Of their devotion to her. Of the time she begged to lead in family prayers and wound up her petition with, "And, O Lord, save daddy from self-righteousness." He being a preacher, I suppose, was her only justification for this calumny, because preachers were already associated in her mind with a frightfully forbidding form of righteousness. Of her tenderness toward every living thing.

In an old chest upstairs there is a yellowed bit of paper with a pen-and-ink drawing of Faith's kitten, which died and was buried under the peach tree with much pomp and ceremony. To console her, Lundy drew this picture of the little black kitten with bulging tail, crawling with considerable animation over the barn door of paradise. On the bar above this astounding back entrance to heaven was printed, "Requiescat in pace." For days Faith giggled about that kitten's arrival in paradise. She had no doubt about it. In the same chest is the little silver bracelet she won as a prize for spelling the first year she was in school; and a book on ethics she studied when she was seventeen at Goucher College — footnotes on every page, commenting upon the philosophy of Hobbes, Headen, Kant, and all the rest of them, with the free, firm sweep of a young mind taking the air upon its own wings. And her first evening gown with a train; and a diary kept when she planted her first flower garden after she was married, with sentences like this in it: "March 18th. Candytuft, petunias, mignonette in beds on left of the door. Cosmos where the rocks were. Marigolds

and zinnias beside the wall. Coreopsis in bed around the old stump. Sunflowers in the garden. Grandiflora, phlox, snapdragons, and four-o'clocks behind the cabin. China asters and forget-me-nots in log bed on hillside." And finally, a week later: "Planted ten thousand seeds this week, helter-skelter. The weather has turned cold. They are lying now beneath the frost like little children crying in strange beds."

What I tell you is that every seed must have come up, every plant bloomed. Never have I seen such a riot of color or Faith so happy as she was moving among these flowers, bending above them, introducing them to us by name. And now sometimes when I think of her it is not in a gilded heaven wearing wings and a crown, but bareheaded, wearing a white dress, walking lightly, as she used to walk in her garden here, between the rows and rows of flowers in paradise. You, my dears, who have grown to such poverty of wisdom will call this the sentimentality of illusions, but do you not envy me the confidence I have in Him that makes them? Nothing can prove the defeat of faith in immortality. But all wisdom without it is only the dull science of defeat.

Doctor Warren A. Candler was president of Emory College in those days. He has long since become a bishop. I do not like that term, which is so frequently used to denote a bishop, "A prince of the church." It smacks too much of the monarchical form of our church government to suit my democratic soul, but if anybody deserves this title Bishop

Candler does. He is in my opinion far and away the greatest churchman of his times. He comes as near as any mortal man ever did to being an autocrat even before the Lord. And like all truly great men, his years have sweetened him; not that I would advise anybody with less power of the Holy Ghost or wisdom of the world to tackle him. Nothing, no success, adversity, or opposition, ever outwitted him.

There have been years in my life when I doubt if he would have really wanted to speak to me. I have said things abhorrent to him about our church. I may have been guilty of *lèse-majesté* more than once by a sort of inverted reference to him, and I will not claim that I felt called of God to do it. It seems to me I did it with the natural human kick of a bare-headed mind with the wind of all weather in my face. Such experiences make you a bit ferocious at times, when maybe you should have been meek. But I am not regretting anything. I am only saying it now that it is all so nearly over for both of us, and since we are sitting down more with the sun on our backs, I am handing it to him. He is a great man and a good one. Nothing in this world will ever make me believe that he really accepts the Scriptures as literally as he claims to do, but he does it for the church's good and conscience' sake. I am and ever shall be teetotally against some of his methods, which were not worldly, but have smacked too much of the Old Testament Jehovah to suit my convenience spiritually.

God is certainly getting him at last. He is more

of a saint and less of an orator than he used to be. He cannot catch a great audience by the neck as he used to do and shake the money and the tears out of it. The reason is he is becoming more scrupulous; the rhetorical power of the stump speaker that he used to have is passing away. Nothing else will move such a world as this, and he is drawing too near his Lord to use it. He is still rumbling, but it is like the noise Isaiah used to make when nobody paid much attention to him. He has outgrown all his worldly titles like that of bishop; he is too far up the ladder to be heard distinctly. Heaven help us if he takes a notion to come back down and fetch another surge at this perverse generation! I do not think he has got it in him; but if he has, and decided to make the fight along evangelical lines, something would happen.

In the old days at Oxford he was in his glory. He ruled the students and the faculty with tenderness and power according to the wisdom of the Lord and his own digestion, which was not always good. I remember a terrific campaign he conducted for Christian education in this State, with Senator Rebecca Felton — then Mrs. Felton — close at his heels, conducting with her characteristic feminine license a similar campaign for the University of Georgia. The dust flew in Georgia. The churches' teeth chattered with horror at some of the things Mrs. Felton said, and she would say anything. She was a fearful antagonist. And that in days when women wore at least two long, full petticoats beneath their longer, fuller skirts for decency's sake,

and never mixed in men's affairs. Dressed like this ages ago Mrs. Felton was an advanced woman before the rest of them girded up their loins for the fray. She exercised all the privileges of her sex, espoused any cause that appealed to her, made herself at home in any political party, and has come precious near ruling the politicians of this State more than once like a schoolma'am who knew what they had been doing and would tell it for the dropping of a hat.

The impression at the time was that she got the better of Candler. What really happened was that he fled like a gentleman before her until she worked off her energy for the university, dropped it feminine fashion, and took up something else. But Candler went on. He never stops or lets go what he sets out to do. The evidence of his success may be inferred by comparing our impoverished State University with Emory University, now built along magnificent lines in Atlanta and splendidly endowed.

The students had their societies and fraternities at Oxford, and the women had their parlors and prayer meetings; but if you ask me, I would say without hesitation that the center of literary life there was about the stove in June Branham's store.

This was an ordinary village store stocked with everything from bacon, flour, molasses, and horse collars to writing paper, peanuts, candy, and whatever else appealed to the appetites of hungry college boys. Late in the afternoons members of the faculty used to drop in on the pretense of purchasing a cigar, but really to sit around this stove and

horn one another in arguments concerning everything from poetry and religion down to the latest novel.

One afternoon Lundy had gone in a great hurry to the post-office. He must return at once; much Greek to master before the next day's recitations. It was nearly dark before he appeared in the distance, his long coat-tails billowing in the March wind, walking very fast, with a sort of spur-clicking step. He swung through the gate and banged it behind him.

He entered the house breezily and took no notice of my prominence there. He continued to stride up and down the room, swollen with wrath, hissing to himself, flashing ominous glances at the innocent walls of his home, snapping his fingers with a scornful gesture. I waited, knowing well that he had met somebody on the bloody sands around the stove in Branham's store where duels were fought daily between the warriors of learning.

Presently he picked up one of Kipling's books from the desk. I forget now whether it was "Plain Tales from the Hills" or "Soldiers Three," turned the pages, found a passage, read it and muttered:

"Well, of course, it is there! I never claimed that Kipling is modest. Neither is Shakespeare nor Candler, for that matter. Humph!" with a nose snort that reflected upon the delicacy of Candler's genius.

"There is strength, charm, and life in this thing," he exclaimed, whacking the book and glaring at me. "There is toughness, a man's fiber in his style," he went on, working his right arm back and forth at me.

"Who denies it?" I asked calmly.

"Candler. He quibbles. He is down on Kipling. Quoted me something from this last book which he considers unspeakable."

"What did he quote? Read it," I suggested.

"No" — with another hasty glance at the open pages — "it is not elegant; I admit it is inelegant. But the taste a man has in his mouth at times might be interpreted exactly as Kipling does it. Not a thing to say in polite society; but in a book, yes. I told him so. He couldn't see the point. When you touch one of his puritanical prejudices Candler has got a mind like a bone felon. We had some words," he said, subsiding.

This is an example of what went on around that stove in Branham's store daily between certain members of the faculty, with their students ringed about at a respectful distance listening. There were scholars among them, a few learned men. But in my opinion Lundy was the only one of them who could digest learning into culture or who had any real sense of literature.

But we all had the usual provincial reverence for celebrities. Never shall I forget the occasion of Thomas Nelson Page's visit to Oxford. He delivered a lecture or gave a reading — probably the latter — from his stories, which made no impression upon me. What I remember was the scene at the Candlers' the following Sunday afternoon. The Candler home was the White House of Oxford, with this difference: that whoever you were, of whatever degree, you received a welcome there.

We went to call on Mr. Page and found him sitting

literally with his back to the wall in the parlor. He was surrounded by a wide semicircle of students sitting with their legs crossed and their eyes fixed upon him. "Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note," is a quotation that occurs to me in memory of that scene; only now and then the creaking of a chair as some youth eased himself slyly to another position or changed his top leg. Mr. Page appeared to be far spent, not by conversation, but by this terrific silence. Our coming roused him only for a moment. He had been literally shot to pieces for the time by the gun-play of human eyes. The spell of silence engulfed us also. This was distressing to me, because I had the manuscript of a story to discuss with him. I had never published one at this time, which is the reason I desired to show the thing to him. This strange idiocy afflicts all amateur writers and unsuccessful writers. They levy a tax of praise from their helpless friends for a thing that they either dare not submit to an editor, or which has been rejected by editors, and they want you to agree that a grave injustice has been done them by these careless, indifferent, bungling editors. I have had my share of these kinds of afflictions, but I bear them meekly in memory of my own early stages when I did the same thing. Poor Mr. Page left Oxford with my story in his portfolio, not even typewritten! I remember what he wrote when he returned it. He said he had read things not so good in magazines. He was a kind man.

Meanwhile I sat, you may say, in the amen corner of this circle of silent watchers surrounding him,

waiting for something to happen. I do not know if you have observed this; but stillness and silence cannot last in a room filled with human beings. If nothing else happens, there will be an accident of some kind. There was a certain youth sitting like the keystone exactly at the top of this human arch. He belonged to that type of freshmen always to be seen in the foreground on every college occasion. They used to wear striped socks and outgrown trousers, and nothing can repress them. I do not know what their signs and colors are now, but they cannot have died out. This one was a dark-eyed, vivid youth who has since become one of the ablest men of his profession in the country.

Suddenly I saw his face begin to work as if he snarled. He endeavored to suppress himself, pressing his forefinger under his nose. But as I have said, this cannot be done, not even with both hands and the law. His countenance went on with frightful retchings for another moment; then it came — the loud explosion of a sneeze. The effect was gratifying. We seemed to be released, our tongues unbuckled, and everybody began to talk except the freshman, who had left the room and could still be heard sneezing vociferously outside.

Mr. Page revived and proved himself more entertaining as a companion than as an interpreter of his stories; not brilliant, but genial. I remember what he said to a young man about the school of realism in fiction, which was just beginning to be felt like a bad dream at that time — that there was already too much realism in life, not enough happi-

ness of illusions. He thought, therefore, the author should strip off the realism and give romance a chance. Most of his novels were written after this time, and he gave romance a chance, which accounted for their popularity. We do not read realistic fiction for the same reason, but because the *motif* of horror is fixed in us, the same thing that makes men rush out to watch a destructive fire. We like excitement and a disturbance more than we love peace, strong drink more than we do a cup of cold water. We only believe in peace and the lyrical side of life; we do not achieve it. So Mr. Page was right. Much of the copy we produce in the scrimmage of living should be expurgated before it is recorded in history or fiction, or acted on the stage or shown upon the screen.

Something like this, the years went by in Oxford. Looking back, it seems to me we moved frequently. I do not know why, unless it was the itinerant habit we had of packing up once in so often and going somewhere else. Anyhow, we moved up this street and down that one five times during these ten years.

The social life of the town was very simple, but even at that I was not equal to the occasional cosmopolitan air that blew up an incident. There may have been telephones in the world, but none in Oxford. We saw each other every day and told each other what we wanted to say. Once I remember meeting Mrs. Bob Hardeman somewhere and she sent an invitation to Lundy. Colonel Bob Hardeman was treasurer of the State and sometimes gave a

stag dinner to his Atlanta friends to which members of the faculty were invited. This was one of these occasions. She wanted Professor Harris to come in to a little informal dinner on Thursday. Understand, the word "luncheon" had not matriculated then in the vocabulary of Oxford. I had never heard of a luncheon, and dinner in my experience had always been the midday meal. So at one o'clock on Thursday my dear husband, barbered, brushed, pressed and cleaned, sailed forth to dine with the Hardemans, looking very handsome, but a bit querulous because they had not made it supper for busy men.

He found the Hardemans' polar-bearskin rug sunning itself on the lawn, all the other rugs and parlor furniture on the front porch and the houseman polishing floors inside, getting ready for the dinner that evening!

I am ashamed to say I laughed when Lundy returned in an incredibly short time, hot, hungry, and ferocious. There must be a stratum of low life in me, for I have never been able to realize the frightful importance of certain social customs.

Lundy was elected to the chair of Greek somewhere along in these years, and worked harder than ever. But I had more leisure. For six years after the coming of the child whose birth is recorded in "A Circuit-Rider's Wife" I was near to being a cripple, and only got my right foot off the ground to take a good strong step after misfortune overtook us and I was obliged to step up on the firing line to face every adversity. But during these quiet years in Oxford I sat down much of the time. I became an ex-

pert needlewoman, made all Faith's clothes with my fingers, read everything from "Œdipus Coloneus" to Guizot's "History of France," and cultivated a closer association with the cat-skinning, struggling intellectual life of the college than I would risk now.

I was still very much concerned for Lundy's peace in a helpless sort of way, and was given to the maternal pieties practiced by women connected with a church school. I was in grave danger of becoming a sentimentally religious person with a sort of hypocritical intellectual bustle to my piety. This is a tiresome combination.

I hope I shall never find out what the students and people of Oxford thought of me during this period, and it troubles me yet to speculate upon what Lundy thought of me. A great many men learn to live and die disappointed in their wives without making a fuss about it. My comfort is that he was too much engrossed with his duties to be greatly concerned about anything else.

Anyhow, I seem to have slipped off on a tangent, sitting in that chair nursing a lame foot. I began to think in a strident way of many things, such as socialism, women's rights, and of the Scriptures quite independently, not heretically, but personally, as if the will of God was a thing I had got to know for myself. I do not remember now what conclusions I reached, as we outgrow the mental phases of adolescence and forget them. But I was less teachable than I had ever been, and I was always looking about for some one in need of my prayers or for some one upon whom to impose my opinions. This

is a bad sign. I make no excuse, further than to say that I have known some very worthy people who had an outlaw streak in them far back in the years.

All this time I was teaching a class of young men in the Sabbath school, which is a privilege I might not have had if the elders had known the interpretations I was giving them of the Christian life. For example, I did my best to convince them that the Lord really had nothing against Moses when He showed him the promised land that he was not allowed to enter. I insisted that this was true of every one of us — promised lands beyond that we never attained — only to hear a great preacher the next Sunday take this same portion of the Scriptures for his text and prove with singular animus how God waggled His finger at Moses on his deathbed, figuratively speaking, and showed him this land just to let him know what he had missed. I remember yet the glances cast at me by these young men during this sermon.

But I still believe my interpretation of this Scripture is the more honorable. It is ignoble to believe that the Lord would pinch a dying man for his failures and humiliate him with the vision of what he had lost, especially after he had struggled for forty years to lead a set of ruffian immigrants through a wilderness, out of slavery into liberty and at least adjacent to a land flowing with milk and honey. He got that far with them, anyhow, and had a sight of worry keeping them from worshiping the golden calf, and making them travel according to the Ten Commandments. Show me a leader of men now who can do it after two thousand years of Christian civili-

zation. Undoubtedly the Lord thought highly of Moses or he would not have been chosen as one of the heavenly figures in that subsequent cloud of witnesses.

Here is the difference between the worst of us and the best of us: a bad man will come out in the open and wish damnation upon you in the plain language of profanity, and many a good one will do the same by way of the Lord, quote a Scripture on your case that feels much more like a coal of fire than a wicked man's oath. I have sometimes thought preachers take this kind of advantage, and I reckon more than anything else that accounted for the unwarranted antagonism I developed during these Oxford days toward Saint Paul. Every time a great preacher came to town he took his text from Saint Paul and flayed us alive with it. Bishops in our church who sustained a powerful and autocratic relation to other preachers associated too exclusively with Paul. They took their texts from the sterner Corinthian letters. Sitting darkly in the congregation on these occasions it seemed to me that every one of them felt too much like Saint Paul. This was mean thinking, unworthy of a Christian woman, and to this day I reproach the last one of them for provoking me into a state of antagonism to this great saint.

Lundy became another kind of preacher altogether. More and more frequently he chose teaching texts, rarely ever harsh ones. He preached twelve great sermons on the parable of the sower, and half as many from these verses in the first chapter of Second Peter: "And beside this, giving all diligence,

add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness." He had the most wonderful sermon I ever heard on patience.

But he rarely ever invaded the Pauline Scriptures. Yet he would defend this apostle. If I expressed resentment about the instructions Paul frequently gave concerning women in the church, he would take great pains to explain why these instructions were good and fitted the nature and conditions of women at Corinth or some other church. Whereupon I would retort that it was all the more infamous then to class respectable Christian women with these Corinthian jades and order our heads covered or to keep silent in the churches as if we did not know how to live and behave ourselves. Thus one word would bring on another word, until one day Lundy sprang to his feet and began to pace the floor like a wasp with his wings zizzing. He had this charming trait as a human man: he could fire up to defend even Job, much more a disciple of his Lord, with the same hot temper other men show in the defense of a personal friend whom they love and honor extravagantly.

As I have already confessed, I had by this time got the bridle off my mind, and I had not learned all the politeness of reverence. Also, I was still young and mischievous. The sight of him flushed, eyes blazing with indignation, tempted me to fire one more shot at Saint Paul. It was the last one I ever aimed at him. As Lundy wheeled at the other end

of the library, coming back toward me, I said in the calm, smooth tone of a provocative woman that I had my suspicions Saint Paul had an overbearing disposition, that the thorn in his side he complained of was not a wife, as some preachers intimated, but fits of epilepsy brought on by temper.

Good Heavens, what had I done? Lundy came toward me with such a stride that I felt he might be going to shake me. I could barely keep my eyes turned up to him. They longed to fall. I thought about closing them.

"Do you know what you are?" he demanded, halting not so much in front of me as above me.

I declined to define myself as a what. I was who something, but remained discreetly silent.

"You are a —— blatherskite! An irreverent, ignorant person, that's what you are!" he explained, whirled upon his heels and strode off.

This was the first and last time I ever heard him swear. I stood repeating his definition of me, rolling the word deleted here with relish.

He was back in a moment begging my forgiveness. He was horrified at himself, could not think how he came to say such a thing.

"Well, it feels like the truth," I told him, laughing.

This, I believe, was one of the reasons why with all my faults and limitations Lundy loved and respected me so much. I never took advantage of my position as a wife to play the offended martyr.

But it was a long time before it was safe to mention Saint Paul in our home. I have noticed the

same thing about other married people. There is some subject or incident that must not be mentioned. I remember it was not safe at home for father to mention currant cake. It seems that in the early sensitive days of their married life mother made an ignominious failure of such a cake. And I know another one where if you mention wild turkey the charming young wife primps up her pretty face and becomes frigidly silent as if you had cast a bomb between her and her husband. He, on the other hand, assumes a belligerent air as much as to say, "If the discussion of my marksmanship is to begin again, count me out!" and he invariably struts from the room like an offended god.

In the spring of the year 1898 my husband was obliged to assume the duties of the English department in Emory College in addition to his Greek work. He did it well, but before the end of that term he was a nervous wreck. This was one of those ends we make in life without the relief of death.

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When you have passed the meridian of your years, if you should undertake to copy your life into a record, you will discover that you must write now and then about a stranger who bears no resemblance to the man or woman you have become. If you have done much in the way of living, you will either discover that you are no longer merely the descendant of your parents, but that you are everybody's descendant. You will find that you are kin to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles. They were the first Christians. We might still be mere Sadducees but for Jesus and Paul of Tarsus, both of whom were born Jews. Spiritually speaking, we bear a strong relation to the Hebrews. They were the Scripture-bearing race. And you may think you are a Protestant, but that will not deliver you from feeling the need of a priest when it comes to the liquidation of your sins, even if he is your own pastor, and a Methodist preacher at that. None of us are Protestants except doctrinally speaking.

By nature we crave the symbolism of altars, the visible images of invisible things. We are spending vast sums on fine churches and rose windows — look at Saint John the Divine in New York. We even imitate the Christians of the Middle Ages in the length of time taken to build this cathedral, with all the modern facilities for construction, which they did not have when they built their marvelous churches.

We are boasting about how this man or that one has worked half a lifetime already on this cathedral, building up mediæval legends about a modern church, you understand — an artless affectation, no harm in it; but what does it mean? That the tone of time must be associated with religion, even if we plagiarize the tone of time; and we are tending more and more toward the ritualistic forms of worship. The less spiritual we are, the more we require the mere formula of religious idealism to stimulate spiritual emotions.

It comes to this: we are the physical offspring of our own parents and the descendants of all men, arts, books, and religions besides. These complications show up in us as the years pass. Therefore, I say, when it comes to writing your own life, you will not do it. You will not set down all of it if you have a proper regard for yourself. You will not tell on everybody by telling everything on yourself. You will rustle up copy which you instantly reject as foreign matter, stuff you lived in another personality, pages of lost years blown away in the high wind of events which drift back now on a tide of memories. You let it drift. You realize suddenly that the faculty of forgetfulness is one of the best faculties we have, and ought to be cultivated.

So far as I am concerned, I expect to find at least three of me standing before the bar in the last day to be judged, condemned, and praised — that first woman I was, with the simple blue-eyed soul, the strange and vivid one I became in Oxford, and this one I am now with the peaceful sense of firm founda-

tions, like a good old house that has weathered the storms and feels the sunlight upon its roof at last.

But that woman I happened to be in Oxford was no more than a shanty built upon the sands. She could not have lived the life I have lived, nor endured my griefs, nor have accomplished my rewards. I can see her clearly now as I never saw her then, sitting always in some bright place, nursing a lame foot, never complaining, ready to laugh, always talking, exercising a rash and unscrupulous wit, flirting the wings of a thousand fancies, mocking the ancient wisdom of men, praising God like the outlaw of every creed, a pale, unlovely creature with a powerful personality and a glittering mind — Heavens, what a picture! Nobody could love such a woman, and everybody did — and Lundy pacing back and forth somewhere, committing a Greek text or a sermon to memory, as far removed in mind and spirit from her as the Parthenon and the cross!

Still, I beg you not to question her goodness. As near as I can make out at this great distance of time, she had erred into the regulation piety of a church-bound community. She had a gift for persuading other men's souls into the kingdom of heaven, but she appears to have lost for a time the wing-hovering relation to her own husband. She seems to have slumped into a merely conventional wife. This is a fault common to many good women. I have seen much of it in these latter years — noble outside interests which divorce wives from their husbands and mothers from their children. It is a remunerative form of hypocrisy.

I had a fairer reputation then than I have now. At least I think so. We really know very little about our reputations. But as a matter of precaution I would advise women to leave the souls of men alone, especially their adolescent souls. They consist entirely of amorphous spiritual substances. They have as many rings of sentiment and vaporous eloquence around them as the planet Saturn. It is easy to guide one of the pulpy things into the church; but when you have done it, you do not know whether you have committed a blasphemy or an act of salvation.

I experienced no such doubts as these in those days. I had a good conscience based upon an invincible ignorance of bifurcated human nature. This is why I set less store than formerly upon merely a good conscience. The only way to avoid making a fool of yourself before the Lord is to add wisdom to your virtues. All this in spite of the fact that my work among the students at Oxford lasted after a fashion.

One winter day not long ago I came in and found a man sitting before the fire in my cabin. He looked defeated, slightly dog-eared, if you know what I mean; a dark man who had faded into a sort of precocious middle age. In spite of his good clothes, he gave the impression of having been rolled many times in the dust of the road, of being merely brushed up temporarily for this occasion. Adversity was a confidence man who would frisk him and dust him again to-morrow or next day.

He was the kind of man you recognize as some one

you have completely forgotten. The moment he stood up I remembered him as one of the boys whom I had nurtured into the church thirty years ago at Oxford. Apparently he had stopped by in passing to tell me that he was not good, he was a sort of decent failure; but he wanted me to know that he had never forgotten my kindness and my interest in his soul, regarding me vaguely during this speech as if he had long since misplaced this soul, but liked to revive memories of it by talking about it.

I did not consider him much of a dividend on my religious activities. But the sight of him brought back a vision of Lundy, my dear blind saint, walking in his shadows while I sat with the sun in my eyes and a senseless peace in my heart, teaching the Gospel to youths who were to become men like this one. Sometimes when I think of them, the time I wasted on those young tomcat boys, I have a sort of hasty feeling toward heaven; not to be there, you understand, but just to see Lundy privately for a moment to tell him how much I regret the folly of my misspent religion in those days, and how if I had them to live over I would never take my thoughts or prayers away from him. I would sit like a wind-blown candle in his darkness. But if I could see him and tell him, I know well what he would say in return. He would take my hands in his kind hands, regard me with that deep-blue gaze which will not have been changed, and he would say, "Why, my dear, I do not remember that you ever neglected me. You did everything. You were a good wife. I have missed here the warmth and tenderness of the home you

were to me. The fault was in me." He would certainly say something like that.

The thing that amazes me now is that I could have been so blind to his condition during this last year at Oxford, and to the swiftly approaching fate that was to sweep us forever from the life and scenes of those dear days. Maybe without being aware of it I had formed the habit of helplessness peculiar to invalids. Maybe it had to come, and my blindness to the terrifying future was providential. I have noticed this in people about to die — some change takes place in them. They experience a sort of ease at the very last. If they remain conscious, they become mysteriously somnambulant in the spirit. Their flesh lets go. Their mortal fear of death passes away. It is taken away. So that they tread the measures of a dream out of life into another life. Something like this may have happened to me at that time. For I was about to die, not as they die who are laid peacefully to rest in their dust, but mine was to be the living death of one who loses every hope, every friend, all the familiar associations and pleasures I had known.

This is what happened: At the close of the spring term in June of the year 1898, Lundy, exhausted by the double work he had done in the Greek and English departments, suffered a complete nervous collapse. With one final flourish of despair he resigned from the chair of Greek in Emory College, surrendered his license to preach, and made up his tragic mind to take a vacation from God.

Sometimes one should be merely historical and state no more than the facts, especially if you are re-

cording your own life. It is more decent than flinging your hands over your head, giving yourself the airs of a tragédienne and inviting the world to take notice of the tears on your face. The world is a thoughtful old person and knows you have laughed many times since you shed those tears twenty-five years ago. Besides, it is not my purpose to go down in this record as a sorrow-stricken woman. My idea has always been to take life standing up, face forward, and not to snivel no matter how high the wind of adversity blows.

There is really no such thing as adversity. It is a sort of honorable degree the Lord confers upon you in living if you have the quality and courage to earn it. I have taken, I reckon, two or three minor scholarships in adversity, and my experience is that it does not soften your countenance, nor make you lovable to little men; but it certainly will dry the tears upon your cheeks and give you a grand total inside. It does something to you, I admit that. The strength and the peace I have earned make me less agreeable to many people. The world seems far less important than it might have seemed if I had lain down and called for help during my adversity tests. This is probably one reason I never accept invitations to show forth, nor to make a speech, nor to read from my works, nor to preside over something, nor to be on a national committee in any of the great affairs about which we talk so much and can do so little. Speeches are for publication. The gavels we use do not restore order. I have not the strength to keep up with the brisk pace of our times. Such pow-

ers as I have have been used quietly and privately. Silence impresses me as a very good place to sit.

Still, it's no use to give myself airs at your expense if you are doing your duty conscientiously in the public eye on the rostrum. You have more courage, my dear, than I ever had or you would not be there. And no doubt if I had written my life during those terrible years, it would have been a shrill tale, an eloquent bid for your tears and sympathy. But I was too busy then to think about my own life. Now it is spent, and I am sitting like a stanch old period of myself, boasting about it. We must be vain to the last. Maybe it is an immortal trait. Anyhow, I have grown so old and homely and serenely vain that I do not expect to be flattered even by my ultimate reception into the kingdom of heaven.

My feeling is that I have earned a place in at least five of the seven kingdoms of heaven. I shall already have covered the great distances. One must, you understand, in order to arrive. My idea would be to choose a short, stout pair of domestic wings and settle down as a peaceful old gray pigeon saint in Paradise. No harp or glittering crown for me, dear Lord! I should leave all that stage costume stuff for the public-spirited saints. What I want is a chance to put my head under my wing and dream of the shining spaces through which I have passed, of the stars I have met along the way, of the rough roads over which I came on time — ever think of that, how we boast about a hard journey after it is finished? — I suppose I shall remember the grass on the wide green hills at home where I was born, and

the shadows on the long dusty roads Lundy and I traveled together. And if I do recall that terrible night of our passing out of Oxford, it will be like many another troubled night through which we passed into the clear, calm mornings of kinder days.

I sent Faith to spend the summer with relatives in Elberton and found a refuge for Lundy and myself in a little village far up in the mountains.

I must have had my fears during this dark time, but I do not remember them. What I recall now with considerable amazement is the fears I did not have. The world we had lived in had been blown away. Lundy's prospects were gone. I could not worry about the future, because there was no future. We had been reduced suddenly and completely to the will of God and nothing else.

He lay like the hot skeleton of himself upon the bed for weeks, eclipsed in that kind of silence a man finds when he loses God. Even after the fever abated, he had no power of life left in him. I knew that he wished above all things for the release of death. But I was determined that he should not die. This was selfish. I should have let him go then. But if he had gone, I could never have become the woman I am. We have no wisdom, my friends. In our noblest manifestations we are still the creatures of blind instincts, seeking our own good to the last.

I had sense enough not to simulate cheerfulness and not to be feminine, nor to thrust a single Scripture at Lundy during this time, nor to show so much as the tip end of a hope. The only thing I did was to stick around like Providence, in a neat house dress,

appearing and disappearing to him with a glass of water in my hand or a bowl of soup. It does not sound very tragic, but we make most of our tragedies with words. We can endure the real thing very well by keeping our mouths shut; but once you keen your nose to the world or even to the heavens, virtue goes out of you. The nearest I came to doing this was the first time I caught Lundy regarding me once more with human attention, as if I were the good little faded beatitude of the wife he used to have. My knees suddenly weakened and I dropped down beside the bed, buried my face in his pillow, and sobbed quite convulsively. He was moved. From that moment he began to mend. If I had thought to weep sooner, he might have recovered faster. Men are more malleable to women's tears than they are to Thor's hammers of fate.

I do not know how it may be with others, but I have produced quite a number of miracles in my life without ever having had the least intention of being miraculous. For example, I had been an invalid for years when we left Oxford; but after that I was no longer ill. To this day I do not know what became of my lame foot, because from that time on I have had two splendid feet for traveling. This happened years ago, mind you, when our spiritual powers were devoted to spiritual things and not to the straightening of our legs or the curing of an ailment as they are now. I could mention other improvements in me quite as remarkable, but I have no desire to stir up the psychopaths who have their little spiritual patents for working off diseases. To tell the truth, I

would rather die with a stitch in my side than risk one of them.

I was born on a plantation where there were hundreds of negroes. The voodoo methods of their old witch doctors were more primitive, but the principle of hypnotism involved was precisely the same.

When Lundy was up and about, and strong enough for me to leave him, I went back to wind up our affairs in Oxford. We had no money and no prospects for earning any. I was reduced to selling our household things at auction. By rights this should not happen until after one is dead. It is too painful, like watching people casting lots for your clothes before the stones have done their work.

It is horrible to see all your sacred personal things out of which you have created a home turned topsy-turvy in the front yard, and strangers staring at them, appraising them with a meanly diminishing eye. I remember my old shoe box, with the lid flapped open, sitting under a rosebush with the churn and a lot of fruit jars, the kitchen utensils piled in a bed of verbena, the range sitting high on the front veranda; and the pang I felt when somebody bought a picture for fifty cents which Lundy had given me. It was a chromo representing a herd of wild horses flying through a prairie fire. I always thought it gave dash, action, and color to my parlor where it hung over the mantel.

I wanted to weep, but I had to be sensible and get as much money as I could for these things. But I distinctly remember the sobbing grimness with which I watched that sale, and how time and again I

wanted to rush out to save something very dear to me.

At last everything was sold except Lundy's books. There is no sale for wisdom in this world, not if it is second-hand. We were accompanied for years by these books. They are all lined up now on the shelves in this library, not to be had for love or money; but it does seem strange that nobody would buy them, that people care so little for a bargain in the harvest of the ages in wisdom. Especially when, with no trouble at all, you can sell a thirty-third-hand car of a deceased model with every valve in it stuck and probably a bootlegging past.

Lundy's health improved so much toward the end of the summer that he went back to his Bible and began to keep company as usual with the apostles and certain Old Testament saints like Isaiah. He belonged to the Scriptures as truly as ever David did, and when he got out of them he was not sane.

Shortly before the beginning of the fall term, he was offered a position to teach in one of the secondary church schools which was located in this town. The salary was three hundred dollars a year. We lived on it and contracted no debts. It is our desires, not our necessities, that account for the high costs of living. There could be no such thing as profiteering if we bought only what we needed.

I used the remainder of the money received from the sale at Oxford to place Faith in another school. I should have been thankful for the turn in our affairs; but no sooner were we settled in this dull monotony of defeat, where so many people meekly pass the

remainder of their lives, than I became secretly restless and unhappy.

This was partly due to the fact that now at last I had time to take a long-distance view of the situation. Lundy, earning his bread teaching high-school texts to yearling boys and girls, with no possible hope of advancement, while I sat in a dingy room with nothing to do, nowhere to go, nothing joyful to think, staring at the inevitable, which I have always despised as the illusion of weak men. In my opinion it is not respectable to recognize anything as inevitable but death and immortality. So I no longer felt highly respectable. It was like sinking into one of the lower breeds of men, if you know what I mean.

For the first time in my life I suffered from loneliness. I was homesick for Oxford, for the college clock telling the hours, for the dear companionships I had enjoyed there. But without calling upon them to do such a thing, the rocks and the mountains seemed to have fallen upon us. We received no letters or messages from our former friends. We were like two forgotten graves in these high hills.

It is one thing to give up the world, dear brethren, for some grand notion you have of self-sacrifice, because in that case your own pious conceit sustains you; but it is another experience altogether to have the world dismiss and forget you. That hurts like death and dishonor. I reckon this is why so many men who have been unfortunate lose their grip in the game for a moment, disappear like criminals and are never seen or heard of again by the friends they used to have. Maybe this is the wrong way the world has

of doing right by us and giving us a chance to come again under our own steam. But it gives you a queer sinking feeling, and I suppose a good many do sink.

Doctor Lovejoy was the only visitor we had that year. He had a shepherd's instinct toward people on the bleak and windy side of life. I do not remember that he prayed with us, but I remember how he laughed and talked. He had a beam in his eye as if he knew something pleasant about us, maybe a surprise of some kind. He enjoyed his dinner, which was invariably a very meager dinner, and he regarded us approvingly, like a good father pleased with his children. I always felt dangerously omnipotent after one of these visits.

Lundy had gone back to his devotions and spent his spare time visiting the sick, the poor, and the totally lost and damned about town. It was the circuit-rider's life over again with none of the hopes, comforts, or rewards of such a life. His meekness and patience touched me. But he was far from suspecting what was going on in my mind. I was determined to get away from this place. There was something reducing to the soul in the conditions under which we were living.

My attitude to the Lord began to change, and it has never been the same since. Before this time I had been submissive to Lundy's ideas. Now it became clear to me that Providence was under considerable obligations to those who trust in His promises. So I had my eye on God without saying a word of prayer. There were the Scriptures; let Him act up to them if they really were the words of life. This

may sound blasphemous to that class of saints merely circus-trained in the pieties of a good life, but not if they believe really and personally in the good-will and power of the Lord further than the formula of a creed ever takes us. The whole of life is a test of our obedience and faith in Him. But how can we believe in a God who fails to stand the test of our faith in His promises? And why should we approach Him as hypocritical courtiers approach an earthly sovereign, with unctuous flatteries and bootlicking attitudes? The language of our prayers and creeds frequently does imply that the Lord is vain and subject to spiteful tempers.

Anyhow, I remember well the day I worked myself up to having an interview with the Almighty about our affairs. I was far too desperate to make a worshipful choice of words. I was not after worshiping at all. I wanted help such as only a real God could give.

We lived in a house across the village square from the village church. Every morning at dawn Lundy went over there for an hour's prayer in this empty church. He had been doing this for six months and nothing had happened, no blessing or anything. The fact is his salary had not been paid for two months, and something had to happen if we were to keep breath in our bodies.

One morning I followed him and hid in the back of the church. I could barely make out the kneeling form of my husband before the altar.

Never have I heard such a prayer. He was speaking with that strange eloquence of submission which

only saints have, a sort of stricken willingness to endure all things, however grievous, if only he might feel the presence of his Lord. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee." He chanted the whole of this Forty-Second Psalm into that prayer. Now and then I recognized a woeful passage from Isaiah.

Until this time I had trusted him implicitly to do our praying. I had been, you may say, no more than the copy-cat amen of these petitions for twelve years. Now it came to me suddenly like a revelation that he was not the one to represent us in this emergency before the Lord. He was still seeking holy visions and the kingdom of heaven, when we were by nature far from that place and in need of better fortunes here. He did not have the faith or the spiritual sense to ask for what we had to have now before we died.

I have my doubts about whether a real saint ever sustains a sufficiently practical relation to his Maker, who is obviously a very practical God. The only intelligent religion is a faith that will not buckle or side-step the real issue into a kind of helpless kneeling piety. It has always been my impression that the blessing Jacob wrestled for was some earthly protection — say, from Esau — or a few more sheep, or a better pasture.

Sitting in the darkest shadows of this church, eavesdropping Lundy's prayer, I must have been a sort of female Jacob getting ready to wrestle. Memory is a wonderful mirror. You have only to look into it to see some image of yourself as you were years ago, which at the time you were not conscious

of making. I remember now exactly how I must have looked that morning, buttoned up in a little faded, tight-waisted muslin frock, maybe like a wavering spot of light with a pale face and burning eyes in all this vaulted dimness; and I distinctly remember slipping down out of sight between the benches when Lundy finished his devotions and came stepping down the aisle.

The moment the church door closed behind him, I stood up and said a few things. I started off in a whisper, having always whispered my personal prayers and not being accustomed to praying in public, which is out loud anywhere, and no telling how many angels are listening, even if nobody else is about. What I mean is that this is the kind of feeling one has. But as I went on, my voice grew louder, more confident. I began to speak rapidly, as a woman does when she is about to go to pieces and wants to relieve her mind before she bursts into tears.

I cannot now recall all the words of this prayer, which was not so much a prayer as an anguished brief of the situation and a pretty clear call for relief according to the promises. I remember only calling the Lord by His surname of Almighty, and winding up by asking Him to confound our enemies and to send us help and friends. This last word escaped from me in a sob as if it were attached to a pain in my heart. I dropped upon my knees and wept aloud. It was a great relief, these tears, and the feeling of having been perfectly frank with the Lord. Not exactly peace, but as if I had placed the responsibility

of our fate where it belonged, and if there was any such thing as Providence we were now safe.

The whole thing sounds blasphemous, but I suppose this is because our ideas of God are still shot through and through with superstition and a sort of cringing notion of deity.

This was the first day of May in the year 1899. Mark the date, for something did happen presently a thousand miles distant; not what any merely rational person would call a miracle, no more than the opening of a door which enabled me to become the woman I am now, and to endure the hard years to come with courage and cheerfulness.

Nothing was farther from my mind than embarking upon a literary career at this time. I had already tried that during the bright idle days in Oxford. I wrote a sort of nightmare tale which was published in the "Atlanta Constitution." The thing was totally devoid of merit. But I did not know this. The fact that it was published conspired to deceive me. So I wrote another one entitled "Nicodemus Toppinglow," which was published in the "New Orleans Picayune."

Editors must have been easy marks in those days, or they had not worked up the advertising business and were hard up for copy to fill space. For this story was also without merit of any kind. But seeing it in print convinced me that I was an author. I never have felt so keenly and pridefully like an author since. I did not go so far as a certain lady who appeared in a pink silk negligee spattered with ink when some friends called on her. But I do remember

laying the scenes of my future career on top of my desk — sponge, paste, eraser, pencils, pens, ink, clippers, everything writers are supposed to use, but rarely do. I topped it off with a litter of manuscript and an old second-hand swivel chair which was very uncomfortable. I am wondering if I am the only writer who ever did this, or if my airs were characteristic of the amateur who never makes good. The smart old bareheaded woman of me who always sits in the back door of my mind, keeping a sardonic eye upon my literary performances, never has had any confidence in me as an author. She suspects it is a trick I turn. For years her secret criticisms have embarrassed and hindered me in my work like the snicker of an unfriendly audience sitting off somewhere in the dark.

I wrote one more story after this desk was furnished. It was published in a musical journal — of all places! — which went into bankruptcy immediately afterwards. This was merely a coincidence. Any editor who would publish such a thing was doomed to failure. I seem to have been afflicted by this time with a fatal facility of words. I omitted to lay the scenes. There was no ground, no floor, no roof, no sky, not even a settee. The hero and heroine simply talked ten thousand words of affectionate copy without standing, sitting, or leaning against anything.

This was the beginning and end of my first literary career. I should never have had another but for the misfortunes that drove us from the Eden of Oxford. Just get yourself wedged for twenty years between

disaster and the elbows of the Almighty and see if the experience does not give you Promethean emotions and a power over words that might easily be mistaken for genius by those who do not know the facts of how this awful knowledge of life came to you. If you have any quality, any valor of the soul, you are bound to spew up into something even if it is nothing but fiction.

In April of this year of which I was writing awhile ago, somebody was lynched in Georgia — a colored person. It was one of those crimes we have been driven to commit from time to time by way of counteracting the teachings of Northern sentimentalists which have had a regrettable influence upon the vicious element in the negro race. I will not go farther into the discussion of this matter. Fortunately it is now being settled by a strange retribution. These apostles of purely emotional idealism are reaping what they have sowed. Henry Ward Beecher's infamous prophecy may be fulfilled, but never in the South. The class of negroes made dangerous by these teachings have gone North. They continue to go, cleansing the South. In twenty years you will see something doing up there among the altruists. The mills of God grind slow; but heavens, how they do grind in time! They settle everything with frightful justice, time and these mills of God.

As I was saying, we had this lynching. The people, preachers, and press of the North were horrified as usual. Doctor William Hayes Ward, editor of "The Independent," was especially indignant. He was a great man, a distinguished scholar,

and a Christian gentleman. He wrote a masterful editorial about this lynching. There were majesty and honest wrath in the thing, a sort of noble perversion, not of the facts, but of the cause behind the facts.

I do not know how I came to answer it. Maybe because I was in so much trouble and pain I wanted to horn something. Anyhow, I wrote a letter to him, giving the Southern woman's explanation of lynchings, which was by no means a defense of this regrettable practice among Southern white men, but placing the responsibility where it belonged so clearly that it amounted to an indictment.

To my amazement, this letter was published in the next issue of "The Independent," dated May 17, 1899. Judging by the furor it created, I must have hit the nail on the head with considerable force.

Presently I received a letter from Doctor Ward, passing with ludicrous Christian forbearance over the short-sentence shots I had taken at him, but inviting me to submit something else.

That let me out. The Lord certainly does know how to answer prayer, no matter how awkwardly we have learned how to live! I went to work. I had no desk, none of the ornamental conveniences I had once provided for this business, and no literary style; but I had acquired a terrible wisdom of life in a very short time, and I was not sufficiently burdened with a grammatical education to be humble about the construction of sentences. I used words much as a bird uses his wing feathers with which to fly, sticking in an industrious little verb every

chance I had, and going back over my copy to slay adjectives, which are frequently only the parasites of ideas. This is the way I learned to write. It is not an art, but a delicate medium for producing the truth of life, which cannot be imagined or portrayed at all if you do not know it yourself.

I was terribly happy in spite of the fact that I worked slowly, laboriously, and could earn very little with the articles and editorials I produced. What we needed, I discovered, was not money, but a chance, the slimmer the better. If you have ever had the satisfaction of getting both feet into the stirrup of adversity, you know what I mean. You come to rejoice in the hardships of a rough journey.

I have always held that it is a good thing to be born at all, a compliment, a sign that you have been personally chosen to live; and, of course, it is essential to be born again in the Scriptural sense, even if you are as privately born spiritually as a Presbyterian, who will never say anything about it, and always looks embarrassed if you do. But I am telling you it is a grand thing to be born again in the worldly sense. I have had this experience several times, and my chief regret about growing old is that I may not have it again. But, after a hard time, to feel yourself suddenly come again with a new set of faculties, fresh strength, and a vision of promised lands! If I had been Moses I should have died happy, as I have no doubt he did.

This was how I felt in the tail end of that bad year. I was no longer under Lundy's spiritual thumb. His God was still my God, but never again

was I to be controlled by long-distance prayer-dimmed view of heaven. I had got the witness of my own spirit by some power in myself to achieve life here with joy and courage. I had a revelation of how things are in this present world as clear as Saint John's vision on Patmos of the kingdom of heaven. It amounted to more than inspiration. It made me wittily unscrupulous about getting on here among a lot of other wittily unscrupulous people. I do not mean wickedly unscrupulous, you understand; but I had somehow received the gift of being as wise as the serpent, though I hope I have remained as harmless as the dove when it was possible to be.

What I mean is that it is useless to ask the Lord for help unless you have sense enough to place yourself in line of promotion where Providence can reach you. You get more salvation here by this method, and it is not contrary to the divine will. There is a lot of worldly advice in the elder Scriptures. Read them for yourself and see what smart things the Lord told Abraham, Jacob, and the Jews in Egypt to do. Our God is a sensible God. You may endure all things, and suffer all things, and be called blessed for that; but if you want to accomplish all things and suffer less, His counsels will not fail you. I wish the preachers would preach more along this line. It would go far toward restoring the faith of men in God.

I made up my mind to go ahead and take Lundy with me without confiding my plans to him, because he had a nervous, flighty conscience and was always getting balled up in some scruple. I do not think he had enough moral elasticity.

I WAS NO LONGER UNDER LUNDY'S SPIRITUAL THUMB

Up to this time I had always accepted the government of our church as the earthly part of the divine plan. I do not doubt that yet, but you had better watch the earthly end of any divine plan. Our church is controlled by good men who practice all the policies and much of the craft of politicians. You may as well recognize this fact and act accordingly if you expect the Lord to bless you personally. Service, prayer, and honest confession of your sins will surely land you where Lundy landed after Oxford, or at the tail end of the procession on a circuit where there is no parsonage and five churches to serve.

Lundy had lost the influential friends who advanced his fortunes in former years. This was now my business. I had no influence, but I had never confessed my sins to any one except my Father in heaven, and I came from a long line of world-bred people who had developed much talent for voting men and controlling politics. I went about advancing Lundy's interests with my father's gifts.

It is astonishing how many talents we have buried in a napkin which we may never use unless some emergency arises that calls for the exercise of them. I was pardonably successful in my efforts. Some people thought I was unpardonably so. We moved from one position to another with such swiftness during the next few years that Lundy believed the Lord certainly was with him at last. I also was with him, a very active medium for the conveying of the Lord's benefits.

We had been back in the itineracy nearly four

years. We were stationed at the place called "Celestial Bells," in "A Circuit-Rider's Wife." Everything went well with us. Lundy was serving a congregation that prospered under his ministry. Faith had grown into a slim, pretty girl and was a freshman in the girls' school at this place. I was working sixteen hours a day at my desk, attending every church service and every meeting of the Woman's Missionary and Parsonage Aid Societies. The only rest and sleep I had was between midnight and daylight of the next morning — and I was keeping open house. When you are in the itineracy you must. I was also in politics, though I doubt if the prominent preachers who came there suspected this. Long before Marconi was old enough to think, I had one of the best wireless receiving stations ever set up for getting news of what was going on even in the uttermost parts of our church, where vacancies were likely to occur, and what kind of positions were open to be filled. My Heavenly Father knows how earnestly and prayerfully I kept my eyes searching for any chance to better Lundy's fortunes. I have often condemned this spirit in preachers; but I was not a preacher; I was the wife of a good man who had published his past and I did not feel safe. It was a big stick he had given the brethren. I expected some one would use it presently. I was getting to be very smart in mortal psychology.

All this required an outlay beyond the pastor's modest salary. I worked furiously to earn what we lacked. Do not tell me that ambition is the great incentive. Love is undoubtedly the inspiration of the

greatest achievements. Behind all that men do that is worthy of confidence or admiration you will find the vision of love. In addition to signed articles, and a few short stories, I read and reviewed twelve hundred books, mostly novels, between 1900 and 1904. I was well and strong, and I had a mind as fresh and bracing as a keen spring wind blowing over living fields. I did not know anything as knowledge goes in this world, but I remember writing articles on anything from literature and religion to politics which were copied all over this country.

I am not boasting, you understand; I am merely making this point — that if you have in you the power of devotion and an inkling of the will of God, and no diminishing hypocrisy about self-sacrifice, you can come precious near knowing more than Solomon ever dreamed of. Your output depends upon your capacity to produce in acceptable form what you know. My capacity was limited. I had great difficulty in re-learning the use of words — that they are our secret thoughts made visible whether they reveal the truth or tell a lie; that they can be written into sentences more dangerous than swords, more destructive than war, or made into a hymn to praise God; that they have more life and pigment in them than all the genius and colors artists command; that you can make a picture with one hundred words more enduring than a masterpiece in a museum, which can be learned and repeated and believed by all men. It would not surprise me at all to discover that the wing feathers of saints and angels are fine words grown and spread to

their full meaning. This I know now without the capacity to prove it, but for a long time after I began to write I retained a sneaking fear of the mere grammar of language. It was years before I understood that grammar sustains the same relation to language that creeds do to religion. You obey the rules of it as a trained saint obeys his creed, if you lack the sense and courage to write according to your own knowledge of what parts of speech can be made to do regardless of whether a fool can parse what you have written or not.

But no matter how you feel, you cannot labor like this and look very well. My recollection is that I was a pretty dingy specimen in those days. I could give so little attention to my appearance that I practically lost my appearance. The only thing I can say for myself is that I never descended to kimono or dressing-sack. The rest is silence, so far as my workaday clothes are concerned. I recall only one of these frocks. It was of a damnable brown color with a narrow trellis of bright yellow blossoms and green leaves running from the top to the bottom of it once in so often, so that I had about two trellises behind and in front of my bodice, and probably two dozen in the skirt. I suppose the reason why I recall this dress is because the very thought of it invariably causes me acute anguish.

Skirts were made full during this period, and more than touched the ground. They swept it. I remember trailing off to church every Sunday in a funny black dress with a scallop of turquoise silk let in the sleeve lengthwise from top to bottom. I felt

splendid in it, which proves that I retained some sort of perverted feminine instinct about looking well. Years later I realized that I had no talent for choosing my own clothes. I can dress a heroine as well as any author in this country, and that without plagiarizing her hats or frocks from a fashion magazine; but when it comes to assembling a costume for myself, I have never had one that would soften and mitigate me as other women's things do. I invariably look like an honest old feminine verb with an unbecoming hat on its head and good sensible shoes on its feet. Nothing in the way of trimming or drapery can give me a light and frivolous air. I am a trifle bleak, with a humorous mouth and sardonic eyes, if you want the unvarnished autobiographical truth — which is sad when you consider that I have another kind of heart altogether.

In this connection I recall a delightful incident of that year at Celestial Bells. I had been invited to visit the Hamilton Holts at Woodstock, Connecticut. Mr. Holt was an editor on "The Independent," who had taken the utmost interest in my work and showed amazing patience. Now, as a further, kinder proof of interest, I was to visit the Holts and their kindred, the Bowens, who had their summer homes in this ancient village of Woodstock.

If you bear in mind that up to my seventh year I believed that all Yankees were blue with long forked tails, you can understand what a valiant adventure this seemed to me. I was to learn presently that they are very hospitable and probably kinder

to the stranger within their gates than we are since the Civil War.

With this visit in prospect, clothes were a serious item. I was not so anxious as I should have been, but the women in our church were tremendously concerned. If I had been a baby about to be born, they could not have been more enthusiastically interested in providing a layette. They hastened to contribute generously to my wardrobe — from their own wardrobes, you understand. They were well-groomed women, that is true, but not made by the same pattern. Some of them were short and plump, others were tall and thin, while I was disposed to be both tall and amply proportioned. You get some idea of the trousseau I took with me on this journey, and how I was obliged to contract and expand in order to wear these frocks. I must have made an indelible impression upon these Northern friends as the long-and-short-dressed lady. But if so they were as polite about that as I was silent about my earlier impression of Yankees born with forked tails. I had a great time and came home refreshed and hopeful of my own future, which was a part of the future that had never before engaged my attention.

Plans were made to have Lundy's orders as a deacon restored to him at the meeting of the district conference in July of this same year. But this was never done. I perceived that his future in the itineracy was gone. One must work very fast to save a sinking ship. I worked the church wireless for all it was worth in this emergency; and I remember turning again frantically to God, which I never do so

long as I can keep my own nose above water. But I can recommend Him as a God who has never failed me at such times. I have not been preserved from any sorrow, because, I suppose, sorrow is good for growing souls. It is the dark side of great blessings, as death is undoubtedly a blessing, and the last one we receive from Him in this world. But when I needed strength or courage for the weather ahead, I always received it.

There is a sort of scratched, blurred place in the time-table of my memories here. My mind was probably too much disturbed again about the future to register dates. The only thing I recall is that we had company one day. Three preachers came in for lunch, although there was no hiving of preachers that day anywhere in our neighborhood for a conference or any of the various interests which frequently draw them together. I must have been annoyed, because I had a piece of copy to finish that day and no time to spare.

We had what every housewife would have recognized as a frantic meal; that is, one which you hastily provide for twice as many as you were expecting to feed by using all the eggs which would have lasted your own family a week, and by making croquettes of the cold meat which you meant to stew into a small dish of honest hash, because by adding the cold potatoes you were keeping for supper and bread crumbs and another of your precious eggs you produce quite a platter of croquettes. I also used my last can of California peaches for dessert. This is all we had that day save one dish, the

name and substance of which I refuse to reveal here. But it turned out all right, because nobody died or even had indigestion. The itinerant stomach is a remarkably durable organ.

After the table was cleared and the brethren were settled on the front porch, I went back to my work on the side porch, where I kept a chair or two and a table littered with books to be reviewed, with leaves of notes sticking out of each volume.

Presently one of these preachers sauntered around the corner, folded his coat-tails, sat down, and regarded me with a portentous air, as a man always will look at a woman when he knows something that she would give her eyes to know. I recognized the expression, closed the book I was reading over my forefinger, and waited, because it is no use to ask a man a question when he has this puffed-up air of secret news. It is his nature to keep you in suspense for a while. We talked of various matters in which we were not interested. Then I let a silence fall. This is one of the shrewdest ways of pumping a man. If you die down, he will say something or tell something to resurrect you.

"How would you like to live in Nashville?" he asked suddenly.

"We could do it," I answered.

"It can be managed," he said.

Then he told me of a vacancy about to occur in one of the connectional offices. A new secretary had been elected for the Board of Education. He would need an assistant. Lundy would be the man chosen. He was given this place, although at the time of

which I write I doubt if the new secretary of the Board of Education knew himself that he was about to appoint him.

We moved to Nashville at the end of the year 1902.

I have come now to the end of my efforts to advance Lundy's interests. He held this position in Nashville until a few days before his death. My services for him were of a different nature after this, and I had time at last to achieve my own life. I may as well copy in here the obituary of the woman I ceased to be. For fifteen years I had been the vassal of love, with a devotion that consumed me as a spiritual fire consumes a fanatic. Sometimes I have felt like a whole battle line drawn up in defense of this love. I, who was not meant by nature or inheritance to be deeply religious, have felt like that angel of the Lord with six wings enfolding him. I was a great woman then. Since that time I may have grown in the world's regard, but it does not feel the same. I miss the invisible crown on my head that I used to feel sometimes, and I no longer wear the side arms of a warrior for love. I am never aware any more of the awful nearness of God, because I have no such pressing need of His power and presence to sustain me. Now I am good only by habit, not by valiant choice. My troubles are the ordinary cares of an ordinary person. My success is something people know about, like the achievements of other successful people in the world. There are no longer any great tribulations or hardships to lift me lark high in the spirit. I have been let down at last

into the green pastures beside the still waters, and I have found it a lonesome place. I do not seem to need all this goodness and mercy for just myself. My cup runneth over because there is no one to share it with me; and I do not care so much about dwelling in the house of the Lord forever. I should prefer to dwell in a humbler place with those whom I loved, and even to feel again the keen edge of sorrow for their sakes.

VI

NASHVILLE is the Jerusalem of Southern Methodism, not celestially speaking, but officially. It is the headquarters of all the executive boards which control the affairs of the church at large. The secretaries of these various boards have their offices in the great publishing house on Broad Street. What with the editors of a dozen periodicals, the producers of church propaganda, from posters and literature to be used in a drive for more funds, down to the leaflets and prayers sent out to be used in the various women's societies, the clerical population of Methodists is very large.

I do not know how it is now, but twenty years ago there were little islands of Methodists in this town entirely surrounded by the native population; suburbs no bigger than a man's hand, figuratively speaking, sacred to them. You might recognize these neighborhoods by the smallness and neatness of the cottages like good little homes in white pinafores.

Having written much about this church from first to last that was true, I may as well add this fact while I think about it: the salaries received by the workers are never excessive; quite the contrary. I have known widows who gave years of efficient service in some department who could not afford to buy a set of false teeth when they needed them. You must be saving of the very pins you used if you

succeeded in buying one of these little homes with two bunches of petunias in the front yard and a back yard large enough to keep a hen to produce the breakfast egg.

Early in the year 1902 we arrived in Nashville, and Lundy spent the last nine years of his life at his desk in the Methodist publishing house as assistant to Doctor John D. Hammond, who was secretary of the Board of Education. This was a blessed relief to both of us, like making a quiet haven after a stormy voyage. We rocked dangerously from time to time upon the incoming or outgoing tides in church politics, especially during the meetings of the general conferences every four years, when many officials and secretaries were in danger.

We continued to move frequently here and there in the neighborhood around the campus of the Vanderbilt University. I believe it is a Methodist instinct to move, and you cannot stop or abide permanently so long as you are actively connected in any capacity with this church. We started off in a sitting-room and a hall bedroom of a house on West End Avenue. This place might have been mistaken for a boarding-house, but it was more particularly one of the Jerusalem barracks of Methodism. It was filled with them of every degree, from clerks to a Western bishop and his wife. All diligent, good people, living meekly according to the rules of our Discipline, which is a stringent book of laws on matters pertaining to Christian conduct. The only worldly amusement we had was a game called flinch, which was played with cards that had num-

bers, not aces or deuces or anything wicked on them. We did this open and aboveboard in the parlor, after dinner every evening, until somebody's conscience got the better of him. Then we gave up this game rather than cause our brother to offend. After that, Lundy read poetry to me in the evenings, with the exception of those nights when he read Socrates' Apology, which must be done once in so often.

I suppose this would be called a dull life now, but it was meat and drink then to my growing mind. We had a sort of ritual made from all the great poets, and when you consider that these readings covered a period of nine years you will understand that it was a long ritual that we took in sections according to whatever mood we were in that evening. We chose "Saul" and the "Grammarian's Funeral" from Browning. Lundy used to work himself up to a fine passion over the latter poem, and I tried to be politely sympathetic. He would have read from Sidney Lanier's "Marshes of Glynn" by the hour; but I could never bear more than a short selection, because the note was so poignantly sweet and the imagery was too swift — every line an immortal picture of loveliness.

Lanier was the psalmist of the trees and all Nature in a sense that even Wordsworth could not approach. But he lacked the latter's stride in imagination. If it was a bad night and the wind was blowing, we used to get in something from Byron; big stuff like his apostrophe to the ocean. We frequently wound up with "Intimations of Immortality" as one ends his prayer with "Amen!" We

took certain selections from Walt Whitman and left the rest out. But what we read of him was, I believe, the greatest lines of all. We read Edgar Allan Poe's "Ulalume" more frequently than any other poem, not because we understood it, or tried; but we felt it like the dark night of a great imagination set to music — sorrow made peaceful and terrible. We saved Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" for very special occasions lest by repetition we might lose some of the motion, joy, and freshness of that wonderful thing. Now sometimes I read it and think of Faith, whose life was finished in youth and loveliness, never to be changed or touched by time or sorrow. If one must have consolation for an immeasurable loss, one can get it from strange sources never meant for consolation.

After it became apparent to Lundy that I might become a literary person, he was for reading Brownwell's essays, and "Literary Studies" by Walter Bagehot to me. But I was about that as I had been about learning my A B C's. I had a horror of pure literary criticism — all this time, mind you, I was reviewing books myself — lest these students of literature as a mere art should get some mental hold upon the wings and tail feathers of my own happy-go-lucky mind. When Lundy insisted that I must be well grounded in the art of literary criticism, and would go so far as to take down a volume of Walter Bagehot's works, I used to fling myself upon him and beg for a drop of Tennyson, a mere taste of "In Memoriam," or a few verses from Isaiah; anything rather than listen to the dissection of a masterpiece

by way of finding out how it was put together, which would be the poor dead author's literary style. To me that seemed shocking, like the vandalism of ghouls.

This is a confession, not a boast. I am not made properly inside my mind. If I had submitted to Lundy's effort to teach me, I should have done better work and more of it. I should have known how. Now always I must feel my way, go by sound and emotion to create a thought into the symbolism of words. But I also remember this: that it took me five years to convince Faith that she must forget every single thing she had learned in her English courses in two colleges before she would ever win the freedom to think in her own terms and get her own method of expression as a tree grows its own leaves; that a textbook on anything, from English to ethics, is only a manual of exercise by which one develops faculties and one's own power to think and reproduce thought in one's own personal words; and that any other use of a textbook is the same use a circus-trainer makes of his whip or hot spike to force an animal to jump through a hoop.

Maybe this is the wrong kind of teaching, but after that Faith wrote Dora's letters in "From Sunup to Sundown." They are as fresh and free and truthful as the happy heart of a good woman. I also remember that Lundy was not only a learned man; he had an original mind, brilliant and charming; but he never could accomplish himself in a book, though he had great ideas. I shall always believe this was because he had been enslaved by Goold Brown's Grammar of

English Grammars and a frightful knowledge of how to scan, parse, and construct a sentence in any one of three languages.

It may be that I inherited certain tendencies from a long line of male ancestors who lived and died in their cups; but what I wanted during the formative and growing period of my creative powers was not accurate information, but a sort of rhythmic inebriation that set my own mind to singing and cavorting. I suppose I took to the intoxication of poetry and great prose as my forefathers took to strong drink. Still, it can be said of me that I have written a few sober thoughts, and that my ideas of God, life, and love at least stagger in the right direction. I remember being so moved by the story of Guinevere in the "Idylls of the King" that I wrote "The Son of Old Blood" — not good, but one of the best short stories I have ever written, with no trace of Tennyson's great tragedy in it, but produced by the emotions his singing genius inspired.

If you have read "Eve's Second Husband," you must have discovered that the last chapters are written in a different key. In September of that year, 1910, Lundy passed away, before this story was finished. My power to think seemed to have gone with him. I used to sit at my desk with all these volumes of poetry from which we had taken our ritual, reading the same poems over and over. But it was not the same. I missed the cadence of Lundy's voice. I never again caught the lost notes by which my mind traveled in thinking as you march to a tune. There are said to be many passages in my

earlier work that can be scanned. I do not know, never having scanned anything. But if they are there, it was because in those years my imagination was dominated by the rhythmic measures of other men's minds.

I shall always contend that the best preparation for creative literary work is the reading of the Old Testament and the elder poets. Modern poetry merely pleases. The best of it is pretty, graceful, and weak, if not actually decadent. All of it that I have read lacks the wide wing-sweep of great poetry. For example, in composition Robert Louis Stevenson furnishes the best example. When Stevenson was a youngster, probably with no further plan than to pass the time according to some fine artistic instinct, he used to take a notebook and spend his days outside in the weather. He wrote pictures of what he saw. He sketched the beggar or the laird who passed him on the road. He wrote snatches of dialogue, maybe between two women or between a lad and an old man, without taking the trouble to introduce these characters. But it was so well done that the physical image, their minds and their station in life, were perfectly clear to the reader. Then, without ending the dialogue, he dropped it; left those two people standing back there in the road behind him to follow the flight of a hawk across the moor or to set in a colored print of the purple heather blooming there. If the wind caught him, he put the wind in like any other traveler who overtook him that day. If the rain drenched him, every word on that page glistened like leaves after a summer shower. He had

a collection of little green crisp verbs for this business.

Maybe it was a bitter cold morning. Then all the former things of Nature stood up stiff and stark — dead grass, withered seed-pods, the very ground spewed with hoarfrost. Thus he achieved a literary style with more active weather and natural colors than any other writer since Ossian's day. Every man is so clearly drawn that you feel his presence upon that printed page — and such men! Hearts burning, love and death meeting between them like warriors on a lonely road to fight it out. No conscience in Stevenson, the writer, no wasted powers in superfluous reflections to coach your moral instincts. He tells the tale gallantly, with all the spitting, sparkling truth of life in a raw, ill-tempered land.

It is no use to attend a school of journalism or take a correspondence course in short-story writing if you cannot produce an image and an interpretation of your neighbor stepping across your own doorsill. In that case you need not hope to create an imaginary character with the semblance of life, because you cannot do it. You are a dumb-bell.

But if you must write in spite of this limitation, a notion singularly persistent in people without the creative faculty, you should study the art of literary criticism. It is difficult, but usually mechanical, and can be learned. You may even become a current authority on such matters. This is a gratifying way of developing a sense of superiority over the few people in the world who really can write, and is

practiced by many inferior persons. I practiced it myself for a number of years. With no more preparation than Puck had for wit and mischief, I wrote reviews of some of the best novels and many of the worst published in this country during that period. My method was to discuss a novel as one would discuss a certain set of people one met at dinner the evening before and never expected to meet again; I mean as ruthlessly and as freely as that. I may have mentioned the author's literary style, but this was not the main thing. The main thing with me was what kind of men and women he produced. If they were not proper persons, I dealt as severely with them as we do with a brother in the church on trial for misconduct.

This was profitable experience for me, literally the only way I had of becoming acquainted with the different classes of people in society, these heroes and heroines on my desk from the four quarters of the world. But it must have given little satisfaction to the authors of these novels.

The only thing I can say for myself as a reviewer is that I could recognize a good thing when I read it. When young Frank Norris wrote "The Octopus," I gave it a leader. Paul Elmer More was literary editor of "The Independent" at that time. He was disgusted. He wrote me that "The Octopus" was "as crass as green apples." Maybe it was, but I recognized the puppy legs of a great genius in it, and stuck to my guns. Shortly after this I wrote a review of Charles Kelsey Gaines's story, "Gorgo," which I shall always contend is the best classical novel ever

written by an American author. My review of it must have contained some merit, because nearly twenty years later I was invited by a Western university to be one of the judges to select the best essay written upon this novel by the students of various universities in the West. When you have done little good, and probably much harm, dear reader, it is natural to take credit for the good, as you would record a mitigating circumstance in a bad record, for I know now by my own sensibilities as an author that my work as a reviewer was frequently too smart to be kind or constructive. This is probably the reason why I have never patronized clipping bureaus. I can better spare the praise than endure the blame for my deeds done in ink. Let the heathen rage. I do not hear the noise. What they say of me or my work may not be just, but along the line of retribution I deserve injustice.

My recollections of that first winter in Nashville are vivid. I had never lived in a city before, but always in country communities or in small towns where we knew each other even as we are known. Judgment days are every day. In this city nobody seemed to care much about extending his or her acquaintance. I remained a stranger within the gates for something like five years, and later discovered that Nashville is a hospitable and friendly old town, with an unfriendly, malicious, coal-smoke climate. To live there is to have a bad cold and go about with smut on your nose. This is the first record I have in my life of dark days. If the clouds did not obscure the sun, the smoke from factories did it.

A Methodist preacher and his wife always move in the best society everywhere; not rich or fashionable people, you understand; but good people who entertain naturally, without making a fuss about it in the society columns of the next morning's paper. With the exception of that one dead year after we left Oxford, I was always invited to everything, from the neighborhood picnics and the village sociables on up to tea parties and Sunday dinners. Now it was different. You must arrive some way before you are received into the polite society of a strange city. We were in Nashville, but we might as well have been in Kamchatka so far as social recognition was concerned. Lundy was totally oblivious to this situation, but it disturbed me not to be on smiling, speaking terms with this great town.

Our room in that Jerusalem barracks overlooked the fashionable residence street, and I remember how queer I felt one day watching a long line of carriages drawn up in front of the next house, where the hostess was giving a reception. I felt queer because I had not been invited — not that she knew me. That was the queer part of it — to be very much alive next door to a woman who did not know that I existed. But I have been saved by my sense of humor more times than by any other method of salvation.

Another day shortly after that I stepped up into the street car at our corner on my way downtown. The only vacant seat was one partially occupied by this same lady.

"Beg pardon, this seat is reserved for a friend," she said, giving me a hoisting look.

"Well, I am a friend," I returned, and settled down with those motions a woman makes when she expects to be seated a long time.

The friend did not appear. We rode together like two graven images of different species downtown to the shopping district.

I might record many dissimilar incidents during those early days in Nashville. I have always found it possible to be mischievous without being malicious, and I had to do something to keep up the sparkle of my own human nature. I was reasonably happy, infinitely relieved from anxiety about Lundy, and I was working very hard, with no natural diversions and practically no social life. But I doubt if I appreciated the advantages and freedom of being unknown and without any sort of reputation to sustain as I do now. Living up to your reputation is a fearfully exacting business. My present plan is to try it again at the earliest possible moment. My idea is to get a long way from where I have ever been, buy a few sticks of furniture, set up housekeeping, go to church every Sunday, pay my missionary dues, read the church papers, and start another literary career from the bottom, under another name, and find out for sure what is in a name; also, how it feels again to be of no reputation and out to win on my merits if I have any.

But I must finish this present life first. It is not my plan to take anything of it with me but a few photographs, a Bible, some volumes of poetry, and my last winter's hat and suit. My great mistake for the last ten years has been looking better off than I am, and

I seem to be getting a slightly pompous air. Nothing reduces your power of presence in a strange community like wearing your former clothes.

I began, during this period of human detachments, those studies of men and women which later gave me a reputation for understanding human natures. Nobody does; but if you put your whole mind on it, you may get a wonderful smattering of what people do not know about themselves until you tell them. This is how I found out how good we are. You cannot know a man by his faults or a woman by her vanities, but by their good qualities; their strength in virtues rather than the incidental weakness of human nature. It gives you a grand feeling to go after your fellow man with this kind of focus on him. When you are ready to copy him out, you merely put in his limitations by way of balancing the scenes of his character.

There was a little dark wren of a woman who worked in the Sunday-school department. She had a sort of twinkling homeliness and a comedian's gift for dramatizing the incidents of everyday life. She was the beloved Puck of our household. You could never have thought of her as an old maid, although she was far gone in her thirties and unmarried. She had no love affairs and apparently no memories. But she was subject to strange eclipses. Once in so often her light went out. Then she would sit like the smoking wick of herself in our background and have nothing to say. Never would she retire on these occasions and have her fit in her own room like any other woman. She was determined to be present, but not voting, so to speak.

This was not temperament. She was famous for her good sense and her efficiency; humor and kindness were her attributes. If her wit touched you, it was a light flashed on you, not a sting. But she had a thorn in her side like a poor little Saint Paul, some weakness, or a sorrow, bravely borne in silence. It requires more strength in a woman to keep her mouth shut than it does in a man. She had it. After fifteen years of faithful service, she finally let go and disappeared with the brief explanation that she was going home, when all along we had supposed the little room she occupied over the kitchen was the only home she had.

I have thought of this woman a thousand times. She has been one of the inkpots of my imagination for twenty years. Who was she and what was she? A sordid explanation will not do. My feeling has always been that she deserved the best one could think.

But my experience is that the mysterious character is not the best one to portray in fiction. Most people are simple, especially readers. They read for the pleasure of being illusioned, not many of them for the literary flavor of the tale. This is why mystery stories are so popular. They are simple — what you may call primer fiction, which appeals strongly to the not highly developed imagination of the general reader. I do not suppose any one ever wrote a truthful tale of bandits, for example, because as a rule writers do not belong to the outlaw class. They get their material second-hand and garble it to satisfy the popular idea of what arson, robbery, and murder

are. Robbers do not write their own literature. They appear totally devoid of this talent, and if one of them should write a really truthful account of his exploits, it would be sordid and disillusioning. The police would be the only people who would read the thing, and that from a sense of duty.

I have noticed this in my experience as an author, which has never touched the criminal classes. Most of the stuff I have written is the truth one way or the other. Most of the characters portrayed are at least composite men and women I have known. But I am careful not to reveal this fact to the editor I am planning to take in. If I do tell him it is the truth and nothing but the truth, he will send it back as sure as fate; and in an author's career nothing is so important as keeping your favorite editors spoofed. The long and short of it, my dear hearts, is that what we all want is fiction, not facts. This is natural when you consider how much more fiction we produce in living than mere facts.

Truth is a fearful thing. We have the strength to achieve very little of it. War is imagination fought out. The truth back of war is ugly, financial, political. Love is all romance and imagination. Just let the most literal-minded honest man of your acquaintance become a lover, and watch him lie. He becomes a noble exaggeration of himself. He sacks his real virtues and struts in the poetry of purely imaginary traits. He cannot help it. Observe the good little maiden, how she enhances herself with clothes that are not born on her, makes the very hair on her head deceive you about her plain little

face by doing it up romantically above and around this face.

For all these reasons I contend that the simple good man or woman is easier to finance in fiction than the twisted, complicated types, because by nature and instinct the reader is closer kin to them. It is like reading yourself in large type, before you became what you are, to read the story of plain people who do their good deeds and their bad ones without highly sensitized perceptions of what they are doing; who repent and fall again, and get up and go on, precisely as you would do yourself if you had not been perverted by too much of the wrong kind of thinking, which complicates you and the conditions under which you now live.

The wife of a high dignitary in the church who lived in our Jerusalem barracks belonged to this class. I had my first lessons in involuntary hypocrisy studying the moral antics of this good woman. She had regular features, beautiful hair, and managed to be homely in spite of these natural advantages, as if it were the duty of all Christian women to be as plain as possible. She invariably looked straight at you, without the least meaning, as if she gazed calmly at your dead body, not you. She was conscientious, and had a religious complexion — sallow from long repression of her natural emotions, I suppose. She had always lived an active Christian life, and was now at her wit's end to find enough good deeds to do to keep up her normal spiritual animus.

Heaven knows, I had not been a sluggish Christian

myself; but I was frightfully busy that winter writing my first short stories and reviewing books. I remember what she said about one of these stories: "There is not a word of truth in it." When I told her it was full of truth, but no facts in it, she was scandalized. She thought the reading of novels was contaminating. She was the only person in the house who suspected our little Puck lady of not being what she ought to be. She would not do wrong, but she had a mind as irresponsible as that of a mischievous child. She was made up spiritually as a fashionable woman makes up her face, and did not know it. I have seen variations of her all my life, but the utter simplicity of her manifestations enabled me to write my first interpretation of these little blue-backed-spelling-book saints.

Miss Mary Helm's room was across the hall from mine. It was plainly furnished like all the rooms in that house, but the moment you set foot across the threshold of it you had the feeling of entering a fine lady's parlor. You did not see the bed or the washstand, nor the litter of papers on her desk; but you saw her sitting before the fire, a little old hunchback lady with a fine lace collar pinned around her neck and her draperies spread. Her face was finished with the most exquisite wrinkles I ever saw, and she wore a rose in each cheek — her own roses, you understand, at the age of sixty. She would invariably greet you with the air of having just returned from an eighteenth-century salon where she had been with elegant company and shared much fine conversation. As a matter of fact, she would have just

returned from her office in the Methodist publishing house where she edited the Woman's Home Missionary paper and had general supervision of our home missionary affairs.

She was descended from the famous Helm family of Kentucky. Her father had been Governor of that State before the Civil War. She was a thoroughbred, an autocrat and a saint. She was also the ablest statesman of her times in our church.

Even with her affliction, if she had been a man she could have taken a city or led an army to victory. It is difficult to say such a thing intelligibly about a woman, but she partook of the nature of knights as we know them in song and poetry. She had a fine valor of the spirit; she was oblivious to whatever was mean or ignoble about her. Never shall I forget the magic of her presence in the dining-room and the dingy parlor. The crockery became fine china; she lifted the scenes, and we slid up into elegant manners.

In that dull house, full of merely honest, pious people, she was enchanting to me. She had flavor and color like good verse and splendid memories. I could let out and talk when we were alone together as I had not done since the Oxford days. I probably displayed my wares. At such times she would regard me with a sort of quizzical affection. I had been well born and well bred, but I had no practice or experience of living in the world. She told me a few things: I must pay attention to my appearance. I might be a great writer some day. In that case clothes counted for so much and so much. Whatever I did, I must endeavor not to be a frump. And my health — I

must be careful about that, take plenty of exercise. Perhaps we had better go now for a walk. And we would fare forth, Miss Mary, coming barely to my shoulder, caparisoned in her little blackbeaded bonnet, her laces and draperies flowing; while I walked beside her with a mincing step, sometimes forgetting in the heat of an argument and taking two or three of my own strides. These would swing me so far ahead that she could raise her voice to a shrill command to fall back.

I never heard her accused of heresy as I have been, but we had much in common, spiritually speaking. She really believed in God. I have known very few people who do. They think they believe because they have been taught thus and so, but they have no convincing personal faith of their own.

I recall a conversation we had about angels one winter evening sitting before the fire in her room. We agreed that they might be with us. I remember how quiet this decision made us for a while, and how we looked at each other in this silence.

Years later, when her strength failed and she lay upon her bed, not ill, but passing safely and peacefully out of her little withered body, she finally saw her angels and recognized them as familiar presences that had been with her unseen a long time. I know what you think, dear friends — that she was under the influence of sedatives, but she was not; or that her heart action had grown so weak that she had become subject to illusions; but she was sane and serene and very active in her spirit to the last. If she said that she saw these angels, I know she did, be-

cause she was truthful, without one spark of the religious charlatan in her which makes the testimony of so many unreliable. And her assurance under these circumstances seems to me more important than if William James actually had been able years after his death to reveal the contents of that sealed letter he left in order to verify spiritualism. Suppose he had done this. We should know only what we already believe — immortality. But the proof would have everlastingly scrambled all our preconceived ideas of immortality. The angels Miss Mary saw have been vouched for in the Word. Good Lord deliver me from meeting any spirit who has no Scriptural certificate to back him up as a reliable and beneficent spirit!

We live best by faith, dear brethren, not by what we call knowledge. We are mischief-makers frequently with the facts we assemble. I suppose this is the reason why we have never yet been permitted to lay our hands for sure upon the mystery of truth and everlasting life. Go ahead with your diggings and your discoveries. You cannot reach beyond the short-winded powers of mortal men to know. You will never discover a single fossil of Adam, nor the grave of Enoch, nor what became of the body of Jesus, nor what "In the beginning" means. Tear down, but you cannot build up except by faith in God. Nothing else can last or ever has endured.

The atmosphere and conditions under which I began to live and work in Nashville may seem stifling and narrow. But there is a fair and wide country in every man's mind, if he can discover it, where there

is more space in which to think and do than a mere planet affords. You may go into your dark room at the top of a flight of steps and write great stuff, if you can do it anywhere. I have my doubts about hurrying to some great intellectual center the moment you get a literary bee in your bonnet. The dust of New York, for example, is full of the wings of these dead bees, and many of those who survive do a good deal of scratched copy.

In addition to my regular work, I wrote the "Jessica Letters" in collaboration with Paul Elmer More. They appeared serially in "The Critic," which, as I remember, was then edited by Jeannette Gilder. Shortly afterwards I met Miss Gilder. She had the appearance of wearing a shirt, stiff collar and tie. She certainly did wear a frock coat. But her skirt was a skirt. This costume for a woman now might be considered conservative, but then it was a trifle thrilling. She was amiable and her manner was cordial. She expressed her gratification at some reviews I had written of her books. But she did not mention the "Jessica Letters." I reckon this was just as well. Anyway, Mr. More wrote half of them!

These letters were finally brought out in book form by the Putnams. I have met only three persons who have read this book, and they merely said so without further comment. The faults in the thing were mine. I failed to lay my scenes. This gave the story an airy slant. Only one end of it touched the earth, and that only the books of the earth. But whatever Paul Elmer More wrote about books had

charm and flavor. There was the added whisk of a romance to his touch in this instance.

When we were discussing the names of the hero and heroine, I hurriedly named myself Jessica and suggested that he should be called Jack London. So we started off. Then Mr. More wrote that we must change the hero's name. He had just learned that there was a real person by that name; some fellow out West, he said, who was also writing a book.

This was a narrow squeak. I cannot think what might have happened if we had got these letters in print before Jack London charged, pawing and bellowing, into the arena of American fiction, to find himself already exploited there as the elegantly refined hero of an intensely literary novel!

It is queer what notions we get of people by the noise they make. London became at once a more sensational figure than any character he portrayed in his stories, which were remarkably good stories before he became so self-conscious that he stifled his own genius. From all he said about himself, I inferred that he was a huge, brawny man with a red face and a roaring voice; just as I suppose no one would suspect from this record I am writing of myself that I am a well-preserved, middle-aged woman, normally interested in country life and very active about getting everybody up early in the morning and started to work on the farm before I touch pen to paper or even think a thought worth setting down.

London had shot his bolt as a writer and was on the downward slide of his idiosyncrasies when I met him one evening at a dinner given by the Authors'

League. I was astonished. He was pale, dressed like a mechanic in his Saturday-afternoon clothes; no magnetism, nothing at all in his manner to suggest that he had thrust his naked fist through the window of his bedroom to get fresher air when he was, you may say, the tiger guest of a certain lion-hunting millionaire — an incident about which London boasted at the time. Maybe he did it, but I am free to say that his fist did not look like that kind of a fist.

After that first visit to Woodstock, I stopped in New York on my way home for a few hours just to see the place. I have no sense with which to grasp the magnitude of that great city. It impressed me like a huge street fair with too many carnival features. A certain elderly newspaper man, who had probably practiced journalistic mischief a long time, was my squire. He is dead now, but I have no doubt his ashes smile at the tricks he played on me that day, if our ashes remember such things.

He asked me if I would like to meet James Gordon Bennett, editor of the "Herald." I was delighted to do this. I was at the age of calling on all the celebrities to be seen in the great world. We went to the offices of the "Herald." My friend disappeared, and returned presently with the news that Mr. Bennett was out, but might be back presently. I was willing to wait. There was a great stir, young men, old men, and wild-looking men coming in constantly to report on the efforts they were making to locate Mr. Bennett. I should have waited indefinitely for the privilege of meeting this great editor if my squire had not suggested in high dudgeon that we refuse to cool

our heels there any longer. It seems that Bennett was in Paris, where he had been for twenty years. I did not think much of this joke, but it may have been a good one. You almost never appreciate a joke at your own expense.

We had lunch somewhere. My guide and mentor suggested Roman punch for dessert. I said I had never heard of such a thing, but it sounded wrong. I preferred something without punch. He assured me that this was nothing more than ice-cream with a clear sauce. It was, indeed, ice-cream with a rich amber-colored sauce. Years passed before I learned that Roman punch is an island of ice-cream entirely surrounded by rum! I knew what whiskey was, and have aways been able to smell it on the breath of a man with a sort of indignant keenness. But my impression is that rum has a different, spicier odor. If you have been brought up with this kind of vicarious nose knowledge of intoxicants, it is possible to make the mistake I made that day.

My belief is that if I had not had a cheerful conscience and an enterprising spirit I might have become an offensively moral-minded person with highly developed powers of suspicion. But I have never been inclined to look for sin in myself or others. In my opinion it is a very ill-bred practice, and unbecoming Christian saints. I have known some notoriously bad people in my life without ever having discovered that they were bad until after their funerals.

My trouble has always been with the professing saints. I have a rogue's talent for rifling the secret

drawers of their minds where they keep their cruelties and hypocrisies — and some animus for exposing them. I reckon this is because I have suffered more at the hands of saints than I have from the judgments of the world. When I remember Lundy, I taste gall and wormwood in my piety. It is wrong. I beg the prayers of all Christian people that I may be purged of this perversity before I die. I have an awful feeling that some time it may cause me embarrassment when I come to settle my last affairs. But if the worse comes to the worst there, I shall refer the Great Accountant to the Psalms of David and ask where David is. He certainly was the author of some of the most vindictive poetry ever written by mortal man.

In this connection I may be permitted to say something about David, because in my spiritual life I have come to rely upon him, as Lundy used to seek mournful consolation in reading the life of Job. The difference is this: God afflicted Job. The scenes of his trials are laid with the afflicted Job sitting in the midst of them on an ash heap, scratching himself with an old piece of pot. No picture ever cast upon the screen compares in majesty and horror with the conflagrations, the storms, and the disasters that overtook him, and that old man receiving his messengers of misfortune so briefly, himself such an unlovely figure, his friends so mean.

This is not the case with David. The greatest and only singing autobiography ever written was his psalms. But they contain no record of his scenes or his deeds; only the truly human and the truly divine

emotions he had from the experience of living. They are the penitential scriptures of mankind. You read them when you are in such a bad fix all other scriptures fail you, and you find in them noble prayers with which to interpret your ignoble transgressions. This is a great service, because, when you think about it, most of the sins we commit are small potatoes, belittling, if we cannot find some anthem with which to celebrate them and exalt ourselves. If you have an enemy, and are a Christian man obliged to practice forgiveness, that does not change your human heart toward him, which cannot be made to lie. So it is a great comfort after you have done your spiritual pardoning duties by him to read a psalm which records the high-singing fury of David under similar circumstances: "Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again"; which is only a mild example of what our psalmist could do along this line. I do not remember ever to have asked the Lord for so much justice as this; but many a time I have resorted to the reading of some fiery psalm by way of exalting my feelings into the nobler forms of Scriptural language.

But if you have a season of pious peace, there is nothing like one of his praise-ye-the-Lord psalms to clothe your emotions with fine and simple terms and deliver you from the meaner language of religious conceit. The thing that impresses me about David is this: he was not good, but he had the power to see God. The depths of such a man become his heights. He is the biographer of the secret hearts of all men

and the master poet of the human soul. Personally, I doubt if there is or can be an entirely good man; and I know there is no such thing as a completely bad one, if you turn the leaves of his life from the inside. What I mean is that your honest sinner can write better praying scriptures than your Simon-pure saint; and that, to be truthful, any man's record must have some curses as well as some hallelujahs in it. It cannot be a calendar of his outside days and deeds.

This is not to intimate that what I have written or shall write in this record of myself approaches the dirgeful dignity of the noble sinner. I could never swear like David, nor reach his heights of great emotions in a flight of piety. I am a woman, and it is not the nature of woman to achieve more than the minor notes in living, no matter which way she lives. Our spiritual aspects do not seem to stir the imagination enough. If some ancient queen had cut off Mrs. Uriah's head for the same reason David sacrificed Uriah, very little would have been said about it. Least of all would she have written a penitential psalm to celebrate her iniquity. Catch a woman doing that! She could not have done it. You will have observed that a man always writes the great tragic lines spoken by a woman, from Lady Macbeth on down.

By the same token, we seem to diminish the great virtues by practicing them. A sublimely virtuous woman attracts nobody's attention. Virtue is so much expected of her that it is commonplace. But I reckon a sublimely virtuous man would be a phe-

nomenon in the mortal world. It is by our vanities and charms that we win the most praise and admiration. There is no such thing as a great autobiography written by a woman. We cannot do it. We lack the flare and trumpet note in living. Those who try this kind of living may be great forces for reform in social and political affairs, but they cannot ever become popular ideals. I suppose all this secret psychic stuff which determines our place in the order of things accounts for the fact that we have so few monuments raised to us. Probably most of us do not live at all except by reflection, images of love, soft sorrows and sacrifices which men take along with them, merely the finer substance of themselves.

But if we ever do become real people, we will never produce a psalmist or an Isaiah. When you consider the prescient powers of women, it is a significant circumstance that there is not a single female prophet in the Bible. Apt as not she would have been regarded as a sibyl or a witch if she had tried to be one. Meanwhile my feeling is that all history and the whole of Nature conspire to keep us in our former place: and the only use I ever expect to make of David is not to imitate him, but to locate him. If he made it through, I ought to be able to do it. For, whatever may be said of our mortal existence, whether it is our own or a part of man's, we certainly are immortal; and more inclined, I believe, to live hereafter than men are.

I made my next visit to New York during the spring of that first year of our residence in Nashville.

One of the problems that confront me in writing

the truth about those days is to tell how I got the money to do the things I did. For until "A Circuit-Rider's Wife" was accepted by the "Saturday Evening Post," we had very little money and none to spare. I must have economized frightfully in clothes and tips when I traveled. You can do that when you are born without a sense of style and have lived with all your feminine vanities prayerfully suppressed; and when you paid wages to your one servant, but had no occasion to tip public servants. I was a fairly well-to-do person and had been abroad in the world many times before I learned quite by accident that taxicab drivers also expected to be tipped. I thought the curious swollen glare with which they followed me into the hotel, or wherever I disembarked, was the natural ferocious look of these men, who must have a terrible time turning corners and worming through traffic. Now it requires a real moral effort not to surrender the extra change to them. But I always make it, because by the time I had learned that they also belonged to the gratuity class, I had learned to tip waiters, porters, maids, bell-boys, and other people's servants. When I became aware of the taxicab man's levy, I reacted. I became a conservative, otherwise known as a "tightwad." My belief is that the people who expect tips are the ablest psychologists and hypocrites in the country. They sell you flattery and attention as distinct from service at so much per flatter, and they have well-practiced methods of forcing your generosity. I never have understood why the church people who so frequently tell how soon the world would be converted if the

money spent, say, for tobacco, should be given to foreign missions, do not make the same point about saving tips for the conversion of the heathen.

During this visit the Hamilton Holts gave a reception in my honor. Among the guests invited were the authors about town whose books I had reviewed, regardless of how I had reviewed them.

I wore a black dress as usual. Most women put on black when they become related by marriage to the Methodist itineracy. It is not exactly mourning, but a sort of habit like that worn by other women of religious orders. Now and then you merely add a touch of discreet color. My dress had a wreath of pale-blue flowers and black leaves appliquéed around the neck — not the shoulders. Heaven forbid! I was the only woman present who proclaimed her neck and no more. This was a prim, slim frock that trailed behind — nothing august or spreading about the train, you understand; the skirt was simply made a trifle longer behind. My straight bright hair was brushed back smoothly and tucked up high in a small honest knot, and I wore a good little look on my face. I am certain of this, because I was feeling a bit squeamish spiritually about being out in cosmopolitan society. The only things I had that looked as well as anybody's were my hands. These hands have never registered the hardships through which I have passed. They still belong to the aristocratic branch of my family.

Please observe me, with them neatly folded about that black dress, with that good little look, no rouge, standing in the midst of a double parlor,

meeting the world in its evening clothes for the first time.

I do not remember saying anything; only that many people talked to me and seemed to regard me with a sort of kind brightness. The very authors seemed relieved at the sight of me. No one can look more innocent than I can of myself. I doubt if there was a single trace in my face of the mischievous mind I showed as a reviewer of books.

Some of the best writers in this country do not write very much. I met a number of them. But they still seem too sacred to be called by name in this public place. They are private people with brains, genially serious, and their minds have not warped their personal sense of themselves, good-looking, well-dressed, far too serene to produce active copy.

This was a raw period when smart people wrote books on social economics. You get my meaning when you are reminded that Charlotte Perkins Gilman was regarded as an authority on this subject. She was among those present at this reception. We had just had a passage at arms in a series of articles designed to promote a theory she had about the Citizen Babe, a sort of orphan with living parents who was to be brought up without the sentimentalities and weaknesses of natural affections as I remember. Mrs. Gilman did not refer to this altercation, and I felt that I could afford to remain silent.

I met Ella Wheeler Wilcox on this occasion. The pleasure was all mine. She greeted me with a cold look and passed on. I had just reviewed an absurd novel she wrote entitled "Sweet Danger." Just the

kind of thing to be converted into a popular screen picture, and I think it recently has been put on.

Faith was still in the girls' college at Celestial Bells, but she spent the summer with us in Nashville. She was a happy girl, beginning to be pretty. She began with her nose. As a child this nose had been a soft little smudge in her dear little cherry-blossom face. Now it suddenly firmed up and became an exquisitely straight nose; what you may call a perfect-lady's nose, a rare accomplishment in my family. Perceiving this change in her countenance, I trembled, because I knew it portended some kind of excellence and correctness in sensibility, and it might lead to the practice of fine vanities in her appearance, or it might mean that she would develop the classical mind of her father, who had a similar nose, and whose invincible mental integrity had led him astray many times. I did not want her to strive too hard after perfection in any line. That sort of thing tends to a certain hardening even of the virtues. It takes away the evidences of those human imperfections which are so endearing, and makes you a formidable person. I have known it to make a pharisee of a Christian and an excellent old maid of a woman. Unless she is a monster of suspicion or of selfishness, no mother wants her daughter to shrink up into a spinster.

I do not recall that Faith ever showed any alarming religious symptoms. On the contrary, she retained from start to finish an honest, tender human relation to her Heavenly Father, and was rarely ever disturbed by her conscience. But she was capable of

rejecting some of the sternest doctrine of the Christian religion as taught. Some time during this summer she confided to her father that she found it impossible to believe in the Devil!

This is how much Lundy loved the child — he relieved her of that obligation. He told her that faith in the Devil was not essential to salvation. He referred her to a book written by Canon Farrar on this subject. It seems that the good Canon also had his misgivings about whether we created our own devil or had him thrust upon us by the Almighty, and he wrote this book to relieve his mind, and more particularly to mitigate the terrors we all have of an up-and-doing deity of darkness beyond our control. Lundy was a great physician who could not heal himself, but he could be trusted with the most delicate spiritual disorders of other people. So Faith lived and died, cheerfully controlling her own powers and principalities of darkness without ever suspecting her Heavenly Father of loosing a smart old Satan on her trail.

But can you see her, age sixteen, all pinkness and prettiness in her light frock, sitting beneath a huge elm tree, defending her young soul with what a brave old saint had written against the Devil, probably never dreaming that it would be read by any one except bespectacled theologians?

I suppose such a performance would be regarded now as a travesty upon youth. But if you think about it, youth covers a very short period. We must live a much longer time under the grave responsibilities of bearing the burdens and performing the

sober duties of life. I am wondering what kind of middle-aged people and old people this present motoring, dancing, pleasure-practicing generation will make. They will settle down, of course, because they must. Nature sees to that. But what kind of civilization will they produce? And what kind of old people will they become? They are learning enough now of what is wrong and weak to make them cynical then. But maybe our grandparents thought the same way about us when we were young, and we really have turned out very well in our old age.

Faith was a busy young person when she discovered that she had a mind of her own with which she could think for herself. She liked to use it as you use a broom, briskly, with a sort of cleaning fierceness. She worked up convictions on this or on that issue, only to discard them as a lady discards a torn fan. She was forever going off on some tangent, but never got far enough to affect her character before she would flirt around, come back, and start in another direction. She was always tremendously interested in politics, and once she astonished us by becoming a Republican for conscience' sake. She would always take her conscience with her whatever direction she took; a trait she must have inherited from her father.

No one reproached her for becoming a Republican, although this is not done in the best society down here, unless you happen to be born one. But we remained Democrats. Presently that lonely little ewe lamb came back into the fold of her ancestral political party and remained a dutiful Democrat, without

voting, until the day of her death. She was the same way about suffrage for women, which was barely beginning then to take form in the social consciousness. At first we thought she might be going to follow in the wide footsteps of Anna Howard Shaw. But her young indignant eloquence suddenly died down, and for a year or more she became a lovely old-fashioned girl, with all the mincing manners of this type — experimenting, you understand, to find out how it felt to be cast in this rôle. Then she grew up unexpectedly into a woman mentally, got her bearings, and decided permanently that it might become her duty to vote, in which case she would do her duty.

Once when she was a sophomore at Goucher College she voluntarily relinquished the idea of marriage, never having had a lover, and decided that she would devote her life to social service. But this plan was abandoned when she made a classroom study of community kitchens and reached the shrewd conclusion that no sort of community life would be satisfactory to people born to be and remain private individuals in their personal lives, with contrary tastes about foods, religion, love, and business.

Like her father, she suffered all the pangs of an accurate mind. How many times have I seen them race for the dictionary or some reference book to settle a dispute about a quotation or the pronunciation of a word!

With me, orthography is purely inspirational. I spell by ear, which has its advantages, because no matter whether you know the conventional way of

spelling a word, you do not on that account shrink from using it if you need it. You merely sing the sound of it with your pen regardless of how many letters you use or leave out.

But I could never convince either Faith or Lundy that this was a virtuous practice. Lundy was always at great pains to correct this fault in me. He accepted without question my spiritual deviations from orthodoxy; but when it came to spelling, punctuation, little things like that, which can have no possible effect upon your salvation, he was positively narrow and tyrannical.

Faith had the same mind about this. After her father's death, when it became her duty to read and correct my copy, I have seen her sigh and lift her eyes tragically as if she called upon high heaven to witness how iniquitously her mother had spelled such and such a word.

But all this came later. In September, 1904, she entered the Woman's College at Baltimore, now known as Goucher College.

This was my disposition of Faith. We had no home in Nashville. Lundy's position there depended upon the political tides in the government of our church. He was doing well, but I never knew what might happen. The wisest thing to do would be to keep Faith in the active, objective life of youth during her formative years, lest a shadow should fall upon her mind. So away she went to this college, from which she graduated four years later. She may have been a stormy petrel at times. I think she was, but always to defend her convictions, never her con-

duct. She did very well and earned her share of the honors such places confer.

She was touchingly upright in all her affairs. She was not required to do it, but she used to send in an itemized expense account at the end of each month; every little penny she had spent, even if it had been spent foolishly. And there was always a minute balance at the bottom of this humorous little column of figures. She undoubtedly inherited this balance-holding power from her father, who would never contract a debt or spend quite all he had.

God was certainly with me during these four years. Otherwise I could never have kept Faith in this school. I have no idea how I managed to meet these expenses. Her father contributed what could be spared from his salary, but this was not half enough.

One thing I remember doing to increase my income. For the sum of eight dollars each week I wrote an article on the Acts of the Apostles for the Sunday-school magazine of our church. Bishop Candler also wrote on some phase of the same subject, Acts being the Scriptures studied in all Sabbath schools during that particular period. Nothing happened. We traveled together, without speaking, through these Gospels more amicably than Paul and Barnabas did on their missionary journeys. For if I remember correctly Barnabas left Paul in high dudgeon one time and went to visit his kindred on the Isle of Cyprus. I reckon one reason was that these two apostles did speak to each other, and probably disagreed, as no doubt the bishop might have

done with me if we had been within speaking distance. What I mean is that you can be much nearer some brother man, spiritually speaking, than you can as a human being endowed with the heinousness common to our species.

I have always, under all circumstances, felt rather near and kin to this particular bishop in the spirit. In the bottom of my heart I feel that unusual thing for me — reverence. But I have never been able to resist the temptation to take a pinch out of him now and then, because it is so easy to do; which is not a moral reason, of course, but one any one except a bishop can understand. And formerly, at least, he was not himself above taking a crack at me. When the "Jessica Letters" appeared, I sent him an autographed copy of this book, because I wanted somebody to read the thing and I was by no means sure that there would be any voluntary readers. The bishop wrote by return mail, acknowledging the gift. He said he wanted to thank me before he read it, because he doubted if he would be inclined to do so afterwards! I doubt if he ever did read it!

VII

A CERTAIN writer who had produced many doubtful novels once told me that the only way to dramatize a wedding was to break it up. The same thing may be said of a dutiful life. If you live for forty years in your own yard, attend strictly to your own business, keep your church vows and bring up your sons and daughters in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, you may be an excellent woman, useful and trustworthy; but you will not be an interesting person. Your good works would produce dull copy. If you appeared in fiction, it would be by contrast with the more exciting escapades of your sons and daughters, and I do not think you could get on the stage or screen at all. Ethel Barrymore might interpret you there, but she never will. She will stick to the rôle of some Tess of the D'Urbervilles type.

Maude Adams used to come precious near taking you off sometimes in a good little play. I remember seeing her do it. But she was a beseeching young widow in a beautiful flower basket of a house. Her children were dressed within an inch of their lives, and behaved perfectly. She had a lover at her beck and call, and the performance only lasted two hours — while yours has lasted forty years in the same old dingy house, with the same old husband who could no more become a lover than an old bearded oak could bloom. Your children were always soiling their clean clothes, and only behaving perfectly for a few

minutes now and then, and you were so busy you could never take the time to look like the heroine you really were. So the things you have done and the trials you endured in these forty years will never be dramatized — not the weary way you really looked and worked and prayed to accomplish them.

In the same sense, I have never been a thrilling character. It requires considerable talent now for me to hold your interest in this record by spoofing it up with the inside copy of my heart, which is always emotional and exciting no matter how commonplace your life appears to be.

During these first seven years in Nashville, while I was doing my duty at the rate of twelve hours' hard work every day, it seems to me that I was an ordinary person of no importance. Hard work never shows you off, anyway. It is success that turns the trick. How many thousands pass their whole lives in a voluntary sentence to hard labor without ever being noticed or praised! If by some fluke I had not landed inside the periphery of the literary world, you would never have heard of me; and I am telling you it is no proof of worth to be able to write a great book, or to paint an immortal picture, or to sway the populace with noble eloquence; but only of genius or enough talent. Some of the worst people have done all these things. It is playing the game right that counts, taking your losses with courage and your winning with meekness, being decent and honest and keeping faith with the eternal order. This is big doings and great living. But they do not bring distinction.

I WOULD SIT A LONG WAY OFF UNDER SOME TREE

It is perfectly apparent that I do not belong to this class or I should not be writing so much copy about myself. But you will admit that it is human copy, and to be human is not only to err; it is sometimes to be more beloved and cherished than the terribly good and great ever are. I pray you, therefore, not to think of me as a promising young writer during these years, struggling to realize an ambition, but to do a good job with words, to earn what we needed to keep Faith supplied with the right work and happiness and to bring her forth with high wings and a clear mind. I thought a great deal about that, especially when I was very tired and must finish one of those articles on the Acts of the Apostles. But I had my lapses.

Nashville is probably the only city in the world that wears a rainbow fringe of larkspur around her edges in the spring. Sometimes, when the day was entrancingly soft and bright, I flung duty and conscience into the waste-basket, and went off with the morning beyond our end of the town to keep company with a certain hillside where the larkspur bent and waved stiffly like a crinkly silken flag of all the colors in the heavens. I would sit a long way off under some tree and remember the child I used to be on the hills at home where these flowers bloomed. It came back to me how I would hurry away early in the morning to make wreaths and wreaths of the little pink and white and blue blossoms as a woman feels obliged to get a certain stint of fancy-work done that day.

But I made no wreaths now. When you have

grown up and been changed by many joys and sorrows, it is no use to plagiarize the child you have been, because what she was and what she felt will never come back to you. Still, I used to see her quite plainly at such times, moving about among the larkspur that grew on a certain slope of the avenue, not much taller than the spikes of blooms they made. She was the funny little round-bodied cocoon of a butterfly mind, wearing a long-sleeved, sparrow-tailed apron, barefooted and bareheaded, blue eyes shining, very happy, making rainbow wreaths, never to be kept, merely to be thought out with her fingers and left to wither upon the grass. I used to long for her as you long for a dear companion who has passed away.

I do not seem to have performed a single outstanding deed during these earlier years in Nashville, nothing that would enhance me here.

But if you go on dipping in and out of the world, it changes you some. You are apt to get a beam in your eye at last.

I began to visit New York more frequently. I was still wearing my Methodist clothes, but seeing so many other women dressed differently and more fluently had its effect. Shortly after one of these pilgrimages, I made up my mind to find out how I would look in an evening gown; not that I ever expected to wear such a thing, but I wanted to satisfy a vanity of my strictly feminine nature. It was like risking a doubtful adventure without consulting any good person about the propriety of doing it.

I went privily to the best photographer in Nash-

ville and told him I wanted a worldly minded photograph made. This man was an ex-Frenchman. He regarded me for a moment with a fluttering, inquisitive stare. Then he exploded as such people do in frantic gestures.

"But, yes! I comprehend. Madame, décolleté!" he exclaimed, making a graceful semicircular flourish across his breast.

I nodded affirmatively.

"And when will madame sit? To-morrow, perhaps?"

"No; now," I announced firmly.

I wanted to yield as quickly as possible to this temptation and have done with it, lest my courage should fail.

The man gave me a look so defining that I almost saw myself in it, buttoned to the neck as usual in a black dress and wearing a black hat with two black wings enfolding the crown.

"But the gown, the costume, madame! You have it with you?" he exclaimed, casting an anxious glance at the black handbag I carried.

I was obliged to explain that I had no such gown; but my impression was that photographers had materials for draperies, something classical. A bust picture would do very well.

Again he shot off into gestures, ecstatic this time. He comprehended perfectly now what madame wanted. It could be managed. He had the very thing, a mantilla, Spanish, white, flowing elegantly from the shoulders — only he must have the shoulders, he warned, leading me off to be draped by the maid in this lace.

If you have done your duty and behaved yourself so long that you have acquired the very countenance of plain, patient goodness, you will understand my emotions when I received this photograph. The picture did not resemble me, because I had never had an opportunity to look like this in real life — a handsome, stately woman, apparently wearing a fine lace gown that left the arms and shoulders bare. Clothes certainly do make a difference, when they are made merely to accompany you and adorn you, not uprightly and outrightly to cover you. The anatomical meaning of my neck disappeared in a softly rounded throat. My chin was lifted pridefully. I was amazed at the elegance of my nose, which is a good nose, but rather commonplace. This master photographer could not change the eyes, but he made them count. Scorn and wisdom looked from them. But the lips were sweet and kind. I have thanked Heaven since that he did not tune them to Mona Lisa's secret smile. This was the only mark the thing lacked of being the picture of a grand but doubtful dame.

Where was my piety? Not a trace of it in this face. Where were my many virtues? Well, they might have been inferred, but this lady was not proclaiming her virtues. She was proudly poised to smile, and barely missed smiling. I escaped the complete revelation of the woman I might have been by so narrow a margin as that! But Narcissus in his vainest moments never gazed with more satisfaction at his image in the pool than I felt staring at this worldly minded picture of myself. I have often wondered if some beautiful, powerful, unscrupulous

THIS MASTER PHOTOGRAPHER COULD NOT CHANGE THE EYES, BUT HE MADE THEM COUNT

woman with a record behind her of fierce victories of one sort and another would experience anything like the same pleasure if she saw a picture of herself made into a good dim little saint wearing a plain black frock buttoned primly to her neck. Would she sigh regretfully and say, "I might have been such a woman," or would she fling the thing in the fire?

Such questions have always puzzled me as I have gone along the way I have had to go through life. Would I change fates with such a woman? Not now, of course; but then — when I felt the throb and saw the shine of the world? Would she have changed rôles with me? Not then, perhaps; but later, when her beauty had faded and the jaundice after self-indulgence set in, I think she would be glad to settle down in my hard-earned virtues, and even in similar frocks to the ones I have always worn.

I have wondered about this, too — if the bad people in this world had been the good ones, what kind of good people would they have been? I have sometimes thought they might have been better than we are. There is a richness and a glory about so many of them, a sort of hearty humanity which we rarely have, being obliged to be so careful about keeping spotless from the world. I suppose it takes something out of us which they frequently keep to the last, even if they become as spotted as the leopard.

I had never had secrets from Lundy. Now, however I debated whether I should show him this bedizened photograph of his wife with her head so high, her chin tilted, a silver cockade stuck in her hair, and

her bare shoulders rising out of a mere rill of fine white lace.

Finally, one evening, being troubled in my conscience and also inspired by my vanity, I thrust the photograph between his eyes and the book he was reading, and stood afar off, meekly waiting for judgment. He regarded it carefully, turning it this way and that; then he gave me a look bright with a man's humor and praise for a woman.

"My dear," he said, "it is beautiful, like you, but not, not nearly so lovely as you are!"

He was the only saint I ever knew who was also a gallant and praiseful husband.

I have met many distinguished men and women of letters in my time. This is nothing to boast about. Anybody can do it. They are the least affected, the kindest, and frequently very dull persons. Once a man acquires the habit of thinking in the terms of the written word, he loses the babbling use of his tongue which is a notorious characteristic of interesting people. My own feeling is that this nervous frenzy of speech has practically dried up the deeper fountains of friendship. Very few of us enjoy silent companionship; we merely endure it like a nervous strain, all the while stirring about frantically in our minds to find some idea with which to explode it.

Sometimes when Lundy was displeased with me, he could ascend into a sort of infernal intellectual silence which was more terrible to me than if he had seized his hat, gone out, slammed the door behind him and spent the evening in the black world at large. On such occasions I was like that valorous

worm storming the gates of heaven, which is a figuration character in one of our oldest hymns. For a time I would imitate his abstraction, go to my desk, become absorbed in work by way of implying that he no longer existed. But I could never hold my note. Presently I would be standing before him. And I was always shrewd enough not to begin by asking him, "What have I done to offend you?" This is a fatal mistake women make in dealing with their husbands. The idea is to assume all the blame with noble contrition whether you are to blame at all. He knows it, if you are not. And the more you exaggerate your guilt, the more you awaken his remorse and enhance the vicarious sin-bearing loveliness of your own character. Many a time by this method I have extorted the most soothing apology from my husband for some fault I had committed or caused him to commit.

I remember only once having tried out this theory of purely intellectual silence. And it proved, you may say, the triumph of dull matter over mind.

I was in England, and had gone to spend the day at Oxford. My host was a certain old don celebrated as a writer and thinker upon the most abstruse subject. He was an authority at both ends of it — anthology and sociology. He wore spectacles, a straggling gray beard, a sage-green shirt, and deeper green knickerbockers; and he was riding a bicycle when he met me at the station.

I walked beside this erudite old grasshopper up into the university grounds, hastening to make the usual remarks about the weather with which all in-

tellectual, moral, and spiritual conversation in England must begin. We came to a place green with grass and beautifully tufted with flowering shrubs, charming little domestic beds of phlox and petunias. The whole place gave upon other spaces of similar greenness and brightness between the farther buildings, all of them big and old and rather cross-looking. They catered to no modern ideas of architecture and stood with their towers coldly lifted as if they were proud of it. They were admirable in form, I imagine, more particularly from age and tradition.

The don flung himself upon the grass, and I sat down politely as becomes a guest from a young and romping nation on her best behavior in one of the sacred places of an old nation.

My host made haste to get to the point of contact. He thrust both hands out at me and invited me to regard his cuff buttons. The request was a singular one, and made in a tone denoting indignation, a wound or an affront of some kind. I saw glittering in each sleeve a silver horseshoe studded with diamonds where the nails belong, and having linked inside a riding-whip of black metal with a larger diamond at the end. He seized his tie and jerked my attention to that. The pin in it was of similar design.

"A young American from California sent them to me. After four years here as a Rhodes scholar, he could still choose a gift like that for me!"

"But you wear them," I retorted, smiling.

"For you, madam; you also are an American," he said, implying that on this account I must be at least accessory after the fact. "But you can per-

ceive, perhaps, that the gift is incongruous. That is what I have to say about Americans. They have no sense of the fitness of things," shooting a fierce blue glance at me.

"Their sense of humor is a trifle keener than the one you mention," I admitted.

From this he went on to discuss the manners of my nation. We had no reverence, he said. He was especially severe upon us as sight-seers. We came to this place in droves, poked our umbrellas at sacred pictures, exclaimed loudly over these thresholds and towers.

"I suppose," he added suddenly, "that you feel you are wasting time now. You would like to see everything. That tower behind you was built by Edward" — I forget the serial number of this Edward. It may even have been a Henry. "We will go at once and look at it," he grumbled.

"No, I prefer to sit here very quietly and feel it there behind me — feel all this, as you remember songs and war and wisdom made faint and sweet by time and distance," I told him, something like that.

Followed one of those silences I mentioned awhile ago which are so hard to achieve and nearly impossible to keep. I was resolved not to break it if the sun went down. I am a good steady actor when I sit with no lines but silence to say, and that at the other fellow's expense.

Can you see me sitting in the shade of those towers beside this old don, suspended in his British perversity upon the grass, surrounded by the awful

gravity of ancient England in a classical mood? It was merely a test of endurance, but he was a man full of learning with an audience at hand! Presently he began to toss about in this outrageously enforced speechlessness as one does in an active dream. At last he sat up and finished what he had been wanting to say all the time about our country, judged by the Rhodes scholars we so generously contribute to leaven the life of Oxford University. I gathered that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, as it is written in the Scriptures, which must have been the purpose of Cecil Rhodes when he made this provision for reseeding Oxford and Cambridge with a cross-strain of quicker if less cultured minds.

"Now, what do you think of that?" he demanded, referring, no doubt, to what he had been saying.

"I am not thinking; I am still just feeling," I breathed softly with a high and reverent look at the domes and towers above us.

"We may as well go in and have tea," he announced brusquely, springing to his feet.

We went into the very bowels of Balliol College, you may say, and actually had tea — a form of refreshment, by the way, that I have also had in a publishing house just off Piccadilly Circus in London. What I mean is that they keep it hot and ready to serve everywhere in England around five o'clock in the afternoon.

The old don accompanied me to the train, again leading his bicycle. My feeling was that I had made a strong impression, not agreeable, but heavy with respect. And if there are no other contestants I shall

always claim the American record for silence in England under high pressure to speak.

A few weeks later I sailed for home from Naples. We stopped in the Strait of Gibraltar long enough to take on a few passengers. Among them was a round-bodied man with gray hair, gray eyes, gray mustaches, who wore gray clothes and had a neutral-to-man manner.

This was William Dean Howells. He was already far gone in his Easy Chair period. But he was the dean of American literature. I had written reviews of his novels and I was anxious to meet him. Finally, quite by accident, he recognized me, as the West Point plebe would say when an upper-classman speaks to him — but in no other sense. He was far from suspecting my identity when he engaged me in conversation one day on deck.

When he discovered that I was the author of "A Circuit-Rider's Wife," however, he did his duty as dean by me. He gave me some advice. He told me never to discuss my work with other people — I had been on the point of discussing it with him! — and above everything to avoid reporters and interviews. This was an undignified form of publicity. Leave the publisher to advertise my books. That was his business, not mine. I still think this was good advice.

When the tug bringing the inspectors and health officers met us outside the harbor of New York, and a raft of reporters also climbed aboard, I followed Mr. Howells's advice. I declined to be interviewed; I conducted myself with a prideful silence, which

must have been diverting to these young journalists.

Later I saw Mr. Howells seated with his back to the wall in the lounge entirely surrounded by reporters. They clung to him when we disembarked. The last I saw of him he was moving like the nucleus of American literature through the custom-house accompanied by this comet's tail of reporters. He had not been able to practice what he preached.

This is not the place to record it, chronologically speaking; but while I am on the subject I may as well set down the third and only other occasion in my experience as a writer when I was obliged to endure my own silence when I had every right to have been the principal speaker.

I was in New York, probably during the winter of 1913. I was to see the representative of a certain paper who wanted an interview. At the appointed hour the young man appeared. He was tall, slender, with a narrow face and excitable red hair, of the shade sometimes called auburn. He strode in with the excelsior step of climbing youth. I did not see his banner of strange device, but I felt it instantly. He had fine roving eyes, not easily focussed upon any one or any mere thing; they saw chiefly the images created by the brain behind them. He did not really see me at all. His vision rejected me.

His name was Sinclair Lewis. I do not know if he was a feature writer or if he was actually connected with any paper. What I distinctly recall is that the interview did not come off. He did not give me the chance to say anything. He began talking at once

and continued to speak without intermission or hesitation for two hours. I had asked him to be seated, but he would not remain seated. He stood up, he paced back and forth in a fine frenzy.

I felt very queer when he finally seized his hat, bade me good-morning and went out, without so much as asking me what I was writing now, or giving me the opportunity to tell him one little thing about myself, my work, or my ancestors. The only thought I had to soothe me was that he must at least have found my presence inspirational, as the Italian ladies say. And I had my misgivings about even that, because he was a man then so obsessed with his own ideas that he could not have conversed with any one, but he might have spoken eloquently to sticks and stones.

So far as I was concerned, he remained a mystery until his story, "Main Street," was published. The vast vapors of creation were even then boiling in him. Years later they cooled and congealed into this novel.

The sanest, most interesting literary companionship I have ever enjoyed was as a member of the Pen and Brush Club in Nashville, and this was never of the least service to me in a literary way beyond the relaxation and diversion it afforded.

There were eight of us who met once a week, consumed amazing quantities of indigestible foods, and discussed everything under the sun except politics and religion. I do not know why we omitted these subjects unless it was that so much of the business end of religion was exploited in Nashville that no-

body felt the spiritual illusions of life very strongly; and Tennessee is gifted with so much political ferocity that to talk politics would have been like discussing the family skeletons of the State at large. I merely venture this explanation as delicately as possible to cover the omissions in our communions. I do not really know why we stuck so passionately to the upper regions of art and literature unless it was that they were so far beyond us they appealed to our imaginations.

We also read our own compositions and talked about them. We laved them and praised them. No one would have laid the weight of one critical word upon the frail wings of struggling talent in that club. We were literary humanitarians, if you know what I mean.

I recall only one member of this club who ever spoke the truth, and she would do it. Some of us regarded her as a short circuit. She had decided talent as an artist, which she had not been able to develop on account of her duties as a wife and mother. She was beautiful. She had gray hair, the satin skin of a girl and the most artlessly innocent expression I ever saw in a woman's face. She had all the endearing feminine virtues, and was one of the few women I have known who literally would not gossip about other people, however much they deserved to be talked about. But let one of us read a story in that club and she would knock it higher than a kite, no matter if every other member vowed it was a masterpiece. She became rigidly truthful, and the awful thing was that she invariably hit the nail on the

head. Not that she knew or pretended to know anything about literary criticism, she would add, then go on riddling the thing by way of apology for her temerity, while the dying author sat upright with a far-away look in her tear-dimmed eyes.

The very singing-wren brooder of all our geniuses never risked her own copy there. She was a newspaper woman, and an able one; but the truth was not in her when it came to discussing our works. She lived to love and praise regardless of the truth. I remember this honey-bee trait she had — she always carried a small black handbag, and this thing would be stuffed with clippings of verses; really good poetry, though I never knew where she found it. When the murk of criticism clouded the atmosphere, if somebody's feelings were hurt, she would take one of these little pellets of verses and administer it in the sweet cadence of a fine reading voice; or she would clasp the hand of the woman in pain for her literary deed, squeeze it, and work her face tenderly as you do at the sick-bed of your beloved.

We had what you may call a retired member. That is to say, she was no longer in the active struggle as a writer. I do not know that she ever wrote anything except an article on her travels in a foreign country. This was published in a local paper perhaps ten years before the Pen and Brush Club came into existence. She had been elected to membership because we liked her, and, I suppose, because she might have become a writer if she had not been such a good, unselfish woman in the performance of her other duties. She came regularly, listened patiently

to our ravings and the perpetual five-finger exercises we carried on, figuratively speaking, in literary composition. But she never could be praised for anything, because she did not write anything.

Something must be done about this. We were really good, you understand; we lacked the enterprise, the experience, even the animus of our chosen profession. We felt obliged to lift the scenes of this lovely woman who had wealth and social position, but no praise for that article she had written long ago. So we invited her to read the thing to us. She was glad to do it. We devoted a whole meeting to her. Never shall I forget the picture she made, sitting up primly in a spindle-legged chair, her white hair piled high, her lavender draperies flowing, her hands trembling with excitement as she held the yellowed pages of that old newspaper as if it were a nosegay she smelled with her spectacles, and read hour after hour, it seemed to me, while we sat in stricken silence, but not listening.

Still it was the most enthusiastic meeting we ever had; not a dissenting voice as to the charm and style of this wonderful letter about her travels. She went home pink and glowing with happiness. After that she had an air such as other authors acquire when they have retired from active literary labors with the consciousness of having made good.

I suppose the inside lives of most writers are made up of similar incidents and experiences, of no particular significance, except that they record the way we actually live, not what everybody knows, which at best is only the works we achieve.

We come upon a stretch of level years now and then in the hardest life, as we find even ground here and there upon the roughest road. I reckon it is providential. The Lord allows us a little time, a little space in which to get our wind and strength for the next vicissitude or the next hard pull, for I have noticed this is what always happens. I am not complaining. I am merely setting it down here as a part of this record that there are no easy roads from end to end anywhere — not if you bear your own burdens and earn your own expenses — and that the weather of a whole lifetime is never settled. You may miss a spring now and then, but winter does come.

These first years in Nashville were for me a spell of good weather, a warm, bright space in time. I had no great joys and no overwhelming sorrow. I worked hard and was reasonably contented. Faith would graduate the following June, Lundy was rendering efficient service in the Board of Education and had a little church where he preached every Sunday. My place as a peaceful woman seemed assured in the order of things. My literary work was merely a means to this end. I had no worldly ambition to serve. I never expected to write a great book or even become a well-known author.

Presently, when everything was going smoothly and Lundy's conscience appeared to be resting peacefully, that famous controversy began between the Church and the trustees of Vanderbilt University as to the ownership of the university. If the trustees won in the courts, the Church would lose control of

the policies of the institution. The latter finally came out victorious.

The Church immediately faced about and built Emory University in Atlanta. I have always held that the Lord Himself could not save us without working His will for good through our very perversities. What I mean is that the youth of this country has inherited another great educational institution which would probably never have existed but for that row over Vanderbilt University. The trustees and the Church only think they own them. Both of them belong to the students who use them.

But such a struggle is like any other war. Men fall in it never to rise again. Lundy was one of the casualties in this one. A peaceful man, more averse to a disturbance than any other man I ever knew, he suddenly rose up and took sides with the trustees of Vanderbilt University, not noisily, but calmly, and with outrageous effectiveness. He must have known that he risked his own position in the publishing house. As to that I remember an interview which took place between him and a man now dead. This man had come to remonstrate with him, and finally to threaten him with the loss of his place on the Board of Education.

"Your livelihood is at stake," he warned him.

"I do not have to live," Lundy retorted, and went on collecting material for the brief which the lawyers were preparing that was eventually to free the university from the Episcopal yoke.

Things were bad for Lundy after that, and his health failed under the strain, and he finally came

down with an illness which lasted for four months.

I was his nurse every day during this long illness, from seven in the morning until twelve at night. Between midnight and daybreak I rested. From five in the morning until seven I worked at my desk, turning out articles and two or three short stories, enough to make our financial ends meet.

As I have said before, love is the great inspiration. It can keep you up and going strong when mere worldly ambition would fail. I had the strength of eagles for this business. I was never tired in mind or body.

It was at this time and under these circumstances that I began to write sketches of his life which afterwards became the latter chapters of "A Circuit-Rider's Wife." I thought he was about to die, and I was determined that he should not pass diminished, without honor or praise for his courage and great services to the Church. I remember yet how I used to feel after I had spent those first two faint daylight hours of the morning writing the stuff — revived and refreshed, as if I had put something over in spite of everything.

I must have passed through days of terrible depression and almost hopeless anxiety, with Lundy lying so near the gates of death. But if so I do not remember them now. I do not recall writing any letters to my friends or relatives telling what a bad fix we were in. I do not recall a single visitor coming out to sympathize with me in my afflictions. This was because the hospital was located in the country beyond Nashville, and probably because nobody

knew the situation. But all this may be wrong. I have sometimes suspected that I have a prideful mind which conceals the memories of defeat.

If some one else should write this record I suppose it would be very different, and probably more accurate so far as outside facts show. I am only telling the truth as I felt it and remember it from the inside. If the meanest wretch alive had the gift for doing that, he might make quite a hero of himself in a similar tale. I have myself been so touched by the accounts villains or doubtful women gave of themselves that they seemed to me only misshapen in conduct because of the wrongs they had suffered. But this theory will not do in practical life. It gives too many morally catawampus people the advantage of you. Still, I think I have a little inkling of God's mind about them, and that we may accordingly see some strange reversals of position in heaven. Those of us who have had the chance to practice our virtues and develop noble attributes of character which win the praise and admiration of men are in grave danger of forgetting that Scripture which prophesies that the last shall be first and the first last.

But those poor last ones! They never expect to be first in the kingdom of heaven. This is the advantage they have over us who give ourselves airs and record our good deeds chiefly in a record like this one. We who are so eminently respectable ought to take warning and sneak around more than we do on our spiritual all-fours before the Lord. I do sometimes, but not often enough. I seem to have acquired the habit of strutting and clicking my spirit-

ual spurs. But knowing you, dear brethren and sisters, as I do, I know you will make your little subtractions here and there and get me down to par value in spite of all the prancing and promoting I can do. So read on and see how much good your short division of another person's virtues will enhance your own.

I do not know if the medical profession will vouch for this, but my belief is that it is very difficult for even death to accomplish its purpose in the shielding presence of an intense affection. Anyhow, Nature began to mend Lundy at last; and when he learned that his resignation had been sent in, but was not accepted, his man's pride was comforted and he began to mend rapidly.

At the earliest possible opportunity I hurried into town and resigned from the place where we had been boarding. I took an old house on a quiet old street, and for the first time I went head over heels in debt furnishing this house; not splendidly, of course, but very well indeed.

I had always been a reasonably honest person, and the only way I can account for this unscrupulous extravagance is that my head must have been turned at the joy of Lundy's recovery; for I had no prospect of paying this debt. The "Circuit-Rider" sketches lay in my desk — precious stuff. I had no plans for disposing of it. I was merely jerking out a bit of copy now and then on anything from June Brides to Fortune-Telling by way of meeting current expenses until Lundy could get on his feet. But he must have a home now, a quiet place to rest in, if he was to gain

his strength. Faith would be coming home soon and must have a happy place to live in. I was still expecting happiness, you understand. For so many years I lived securely in this illusion. It was my palace of dreams, the clear sky above my head upon the darkest days — the expectation that presently we should get over the last rough place in the road and live happy ever after.

I have sometimes wondered about the veracity of the Almighty at this point. We are made so intoxicated by hopes and faith, by the very nature of flesh and blood, that we expect happiness in a world made wise by unhappiness. But it is not so bad, once you get accustomed to the truth that happiness does not make anybody happy long, but that it is learning how to be decent and not crooked in the game that makes life worth living and insures peace somehow.

Lundy went back to his work in the publishing house and we settled down in this old red-brick house. There was a clump of purple phlox on either side of the door, many flowering shrubs in the yard, a brick walk netted with fine grass between the bricks that led to a real front gate, a big garden, a huge willow tree on the west side of the veranda that trailed its boughs like green veils of loveliness — but not a single thing inside paid for! I wondered why Lundy did not ask me how I came by all these things. But he never did. He was like one taking gifts from God, now, and asking no questions. He was a bit dim in his mind from this time to the end about all realities.

I worked some of the "Circuit-Rider" notes into

a short article and sent it to a New York magazine. It was promptly returned — for the same reason, I suppose, that no motion-picture concern would ever consider putting the story of the "Circuit-Rider," as it was finally written, on the screen.

These people cannot see. They have no imagination of the eye with which to interpret the evidences of things unseen. They are merchants selling the follies of men by the reel instead of by the yard. They do not know and cannot believe what a good place all human hearts are, nor that the last one of us, however cynical, is really kin to God, and would like to be convinced at least for an hour of the great courage and the great faith which go into the making of a good man or a virtuous woman. They cater to the obvious weaknesses of all kinds of men and all kinds of women, to their passions, appetites, artistic sensibilities, and their puerile sentimentalities.

Great motion pictures are as a rule only great feats in photography. They must fill the eyes of the audience to bursting with terrible scenes or grand scenes. But when you analyze them their appeal is to the sensational pop-eyed faculties, made up of crowds, costumes, catastrophes, and wind-blown natural scenery.

I wish somebody would try a good old roaring Methodist preacher as a motion-picture director and give him a free hand. The results would not be artistic. I reckon for conscience' sake he would kick your hard-earned standards of art out of the back door. But, believe me, he would make a fearfully awkward, convincing picture. He would start a revival

in Hollywood and a revolution in your business — not that any of the doings reported in Hollywood are nearly so bad as some of your motion pictures are. He could teach you, for example, how to film a prayer, not with some graceful Valentino in clerical costume on his knees imitating prayer; but he would get a real old bellwether saint with his whiskers pendent and his face screwed up, calling sure enough on the Lord to have mercy on that audience, more or less dead in its trespasses and sins. Apt as not somebody would be converted.

You may think such a performance would be primitive and absurd. It would. There is nothing more diverting in the vulgar eye than an exhibition of religious zeal. But such a preacher is accustomed to that. He faces the same element in his congregation at the beginning of a revival. He simply goes on preaching the Word of God. He knows there is a place in the worst man's heart where it lodges to stay. He lets them have it, hell and damnation, prodigal son, "blessed are the meek," one charge after another until he gets them all. I have seen him do it.

What the motion-picture business needs is a winnowing of stars and acrobats, less art for art's sake — a damnable doctrine anywhere — and more men with imaginations at the head of it, even if they are short on financial ability. The whole thing might go bankrupt for a while, but this nation would be better off.

The "Circuit-Rider" sketch had been refused, you will remember. Something must be done about that.

June was at hand. I felt called to go to Baltimore for Faith's graduation. This required funds. I had fifty dollars — not enough! The spirit of Wall Street entered me. I plunged — in my imagination, of course, because I had nothing else with which to plunge. But the sky was the limit. If I fell, great would be the fall of me. But I did not expect to fail. You want to remember that — nobody can fail who will not admit defeat. Still it was a question how I should get back home if my plans miscarried.

I added three thousand words to my "Circuit-Rider" story out of the mass of notes I had made at the hospital. Then I packed my bag, stuck the manuscript in with my other things and started for Baltimore.

I experienced the glorified distinction in Baltimore of being recognized as Faith's mother. I may not have been very well, after all I had passed through a trifle depleted nervously, for I was tearful with happiness, being noticed so much, and loved and praised and escorted this way and that. Girls are adorable hostesses.

I saw Faith standing like a small pink doll in her cap and gown, and the neat little motion she made changing the tassel on her cap to the graduating angle when she received her diploma. I thought I had never seen a prettier gesture. My bosom swelled, my eyes smarted at the sight of my dear little bachelor of arts, who was so short of stature, and who looked so high and prim in the face, with her soft blue eyes raised as if she said with them, "Now I am wise forever." It seemed to me I could not bear it —

her exquisite self-consciousness. I felt my hat to make sure it was not tilted too much to one side with this stress of emotion, because my hats will do that no matter how securely I pin them on.

That night I saw Faith in her first evening gown — satin, my dears, with quite a train. The color was the palest yellow, brocaded with lilies-of-the-valley. There is no telling how many articles on the Acts of the Apostles that thing cost me! But it was worth a million to see her so lovely, her dark hair without a crimp piled high on her head, her shoulders so white, her face so fair, cheeks barely pink — nice girls did not use rouge then — such a winsome little lady, with another brighter smile every moment, but too impressed with her new dignity to let go into actual merriment. The train of her gown spreading behind her, I suppose, gave her this charming touch of gravity.

It lies now folded and faded along with so many other tokens of her life and loveliness.

When the commencement exercises were over, I sent her home to be with her father until I could attend to my own important business.

I had determined to publish my "Circuit-Rider" story in the "Saturday Evening Post," being too desperate to think even in the terms of merely submitting the thing. That implied a possible refusal. I cannot think what might have happened if the editor of the "Post" had suspected my powers of predestination. I do not suppose it would have made any difference. Nothing else has in my experience, except his own judgment of a piece of work.

I mailed the story — which was not so much a story as a series of impressions, half-sketched pictures of the itinerant life — along with a note merely saying I would call in person presently to discuss this story. I may have put it as fiercely as that.

My funds were very low by this time, and I followed, you may say, with the swiftness of Paul Revere upon the heels of my manuscript. It was a mad thing to do, because editors prefer to deal with authors on the typewriter. I would not advise any prospective literary celebrity to follow my example. When a certain successful author threatened to come and read her story to an editor, I remember hearing him say she would have to tie him to his chair if she did it. They are fierce about things like that.

But can you see me, dear readers, arriving at the offices of the "Saturday Evening Post" the next day? Have you any idea how the woman who had lived the experiences recorded in "A Circuit-Rider's Wife" looked the day she went in there to see about it? I was wearing a plain black alpaca frock — bombazine used to be the name of this material — and a small black hat, trimmed with black ribbons. I was not looking very well, because you cannot if you have been sitting up night and day with a sick man for months, and have done a lot of work besides, and gone in debt for your household things, and have very little money in your pocket, and do not know after all what is going to happen to you within the next few minutes. I remember that I had a headache, but recovered from this pain almost immediately. I reckon many a woman has done that when she had to

be well and strong instantly or fail in something vitally important.

Mr. Churchill Williams met me. My first impression of him was one of good-will and kindness. But I have never been able to find out what kind of man he is when it comes to testing copy submitted to the "Post." He is frightfully quiet about that.

Mr. Churchill Williams led me into Mr. Lorimer's office, not exactly by the hand, but as gently as parents bring a child to school the first time. Then he left me, as they do.

Mr. Lorimer looked then much as he does now, maybe a trifle thinner, and his hair, which he retains, was probably a shade redder than it is now. The stuff turns more the color of stone as he grows older, but you can still see the fire in it, suggestive of volcanic disturbances below. His chin is square and sticks out. His nose rears up and comes down with considerable force. I should say his chin would never get the better of his nose. His mouth turns up at the corners either agreeably or disagreeably according to the way his mind works. And he uses one of the busiest minds in this country. He has canny blue eyes, not large, but keen enough to see through you. Altogether his countenance is a human interpretation of the race and the land that made it, Scotch and Scotland. Frost everywhere, some sunlight, and a good deal of rocky grimness in it to the stranger who beholds it for the first time under the sight-seeing circumstances I was then risking.

I recall only snatches of the interview which followed, and that I did not feel like sitting down on ac-

count of the human weather in that place which somehow suggested a high keen wind, probably followed by electrical disturbances. I remember that he braced the third finger of his right hand against his thumb and thumped the pages of my "Circuit-Rider" copy which lay upon his desk. This felt like a kick to me, especially as he did not accompany the blow with any comment on the story. I also remember that he stood up, placed one knee in a chair, grasped the back of it with both hands and talked to me. I do not recall what he said — wise stuff that slid off like water on a duck's back. But I remember distinctly what I thought and how I felt. Here was a man who knew things, not by his brains alone, but by some vital quality of his spirit. He had a sense of life, "as is, hair on," as the horse-traders say. He knew values, those hidden weights and measures in the hearts of men. He was not to be deceived by academic notions and artistic principles about copy. Life was his book and his Bible. An author could trust an editor like this if she could make good — otherwise not! I felt very uneasy. For me it was now or never. I must either sink or swim in a few minutes.

This is all to be said about him now, and put in merely to fill out the record of my own life. But I do hope to outlive him a good many years hence, and to have the satisfaction of writing his obituary. I could do it without much attention to his dates and deeds merely by soaking up Scotch history and poetry and the Covenanters' point of view. For the man has religion, though I never heard him utter a word to indi-

cate that he knew this about himself. What I mean is that a righteous sense of life is a part of his equality. But it is not my idea to pay the editor of the "Post" any compliments until after his funeral.

These were the circumstances which led to the writing of "A Circuit-Rider's Wife" and to fifteen years of fortunate and happy association with the "Post" and its editors as a contributor.

I took the next train for Nashville. I walked to the station, carrying a huge bunch of what I supposed to be iris lilies, given me after lunch that day. I did not know why the people on the street stared at me, nor why on the train the porter was so solicitous about keeping these flowers alive, nor why the women in that coach seemed to admire me. I thought it might have already got out that I was about to contribute a serial to the "Saturday Evening Post." When I reached home somebody informed me that the lilies were orchids! I still have that wealthy bouquet, pressed and faded, somewhere in a portfolio.

I began "A Circuit-Rider's Wife" on the third day of July, 1909, and finished it on the thirty-first day of the same month. It was not so arduous a task as I had imagined; no creative work at all, but merely copying from memory the experiences Lundy and I had lived in the itineracy, precisely as this record I am now writing is the same kind of life copy.

VIII

RICH people who inherit their fortunes rarely think of how much they should save, because it has already been saved and invested for them. They are not obliged to consider how much they can afford to spend, but only how they can spend it to pass the time, escape the ennui from which they suffer on account of having no natural motive for achieving their own lives. The poor things become migratory. They can choose a season, summer or winter, as you would choose a dessert. If they do not like snow and ice, they have an estate in Florida. If the heat depresses them, they have a place in the Adirondacks or in Scotland. If they weary of lands and cities, they have only to decide what seas they will sail.

They can never rest, because they have no real honest-to-God labors from which to rest, only dissipations and pleasures that tire them so frightfully they sometimes go off by themselves and climb the tallest mountains to get a little relief. It is hard on them, but they do not know it. Their wealth gives them a very real sense of power and superiority. And they are so deceived as to their own quality that they frequently regard it as the height of ill-breeding to mention money or show any concern about what they have or what they spend. You may be the salt of the earth and a child of God, but if you are poor, they can make you feel as if you belonged to the lower classes by the very quality of

their coat-tails and silken draperies. This is why so many working men and women spend their earnings in foolish extravagances. They have no real self-respect and are trying to plagiarize riches. This is why they herd into bodies like the I.W.W. There is no wealth in organized energy and covetousness, but there is a sort of malignant sense of power as gratifying to them as the insolence bred by wealth is to rich people.

Now you must have observed that I have kept a sort of running account of expenses in this record. You know how much money we had and how much more we needed. This is because I have never regarded it as an indecent subject, or even a vulgar thing to strive for if you get it honestly for a good purpose. I have never cheated, nor traded for profit at another's loss, nor speculated, nor failed to keep a contract. All I have had was literally earned with the brains and the energies the Lord gave me. If I spent any of it for charity, it was a sort of per cent I paid back, and was not recorded. I have never wasted any of it in riotous living, unless for flower bulbs and stone walls. I seem to have a passion for building stone walls, which are expensive; and I can no more resist buying bulbs and flowering bushes than a rich clubman can resist strong drink or a polo pony or a game of cards or something like that. So the money I have earned seems precious, glorious stuff. It is a sort of poetic license the Lord has allowed me in return for a good deal of harsh prose in the way of living. For this reason I like to set down little incidents to dramatize my financial emotions.

When the check in payment for "A Circuit-Rider's Wife" came from the "Post" I was simply quenched with joy. It was as if I held in my hand a very valuable answer to prayer. Fortune, the last thing in the world that could be expected to smile on a Methodist preacher and his wife, had smiled on us!

The bill for household furniture could be paid now. I was turning out to be an honest person, after all — you may say, by the grace of God, because if I had not received this money that debt might never have been paid.

But before anything else was done I felt that we should do something to mark the day which had made the change in our fortunes. I said something to Lundy about this. He suggested a party by way of celebration, but I told him the Pen and Brush Club was the time and place for that. This must be something peculiar to us. He suggested one fabulous extravagance after another with a mischievous beam in his eye, but I told him I thought we should practice frugality awhile longer, because — who could tell? — I might not write another book, though I felt books boiling in my intellectual anatomy. We sat down and looked at each other. He had a whimsical fancy and I expected him to produce the idea presently.

"I have it!" he exclaimed, just as I expected. "We will buy an heirloom!"

"The very thing!" I cried.

"We have nothing that could be so regarded?" he asked.

"Not one."

"It should be very ugly. Heirlooms always are," he mused.

"And we could keep it out of sight in the attic the way most people do," I put in.

"But it must be a new one. We ought not to start off with somebody's cast-off heirloom," he went on.

I agreed to this; it seemed a wonderful conception, a brand-new keepsake bought on purpose to be kept forever in our family. So we started off in search of it. It was a long way downtown; still, we walked, being in no mood to travel on street cars. But we rode home on one, because we were too much exhausted to walk.

We had the heirloom, the ugliest little old candlestick that had ever been brought to that town. It was really old. The man said he had had it for years, but had never been able to sell it. We took it, according to agreement, straight to the attic, because it had the true heirloom nature of being a misfit everywhere in the inhabited part of the house.

I received many letters from the readers of "A Circuit-Rider's Wife." Lundy was very uneasy about the effect so much praise might have on me. He hoped my head would not be turned. Conceit was characteristic of people who had inferior natures and bombastic souls, he told me.

I am still grateful to the writers of all those letters; but this is one queer thing I have discovered about such letters: although they may come from the four quarters of the globe, as these did, they were alike in the sentiments and opinions expressed, frequently in the very language used. The same

THE MAN SAID HE HAD HAD IT FOR YEARS

class of Christians everywhere praised the story, the same kind of enemies abused me for having written it. They frequently quoted the same passages of Scriptures by way of predicting my ultimate damnation.

Meanwhile, I was already busy writing "Eve's Second Husband." If you have one little sprig of a laurel you had better not rest upon it. The thing will wither if you do. I was anxious lest I should not be able to write anything else. So I used to lay the letters about "A Circuit-Rider's Wife" aside without opening them. This was partly because I was very busy when the mail came every morning, and partly to put something over on Lundy. He hurried home from the office those days. He was in a fidget to read them. They puffed him up amazingly. If somebody praised his dear wife in terms particularly acceptable, he would get up and pace the floor, his long coat-tails gracefully swinging, his fine blue eyes shooting stars of vanity. Sometimes he would halt before my desk. I knew he was looking proudly down at me, but I made a point of never raising my eyes lest he should stop it. He was not the man to spoil a fledgling author with too much praise.

Presently the world got wind of it that he was the hero of that tale. He began to have many visitors. He was greatly distressed. He had never thought of himself in this connection. He recognized the incidents, of course; but he did not recognize himself. One day he came home very much upset. He had not been able to convince some old friends from Georgia who called on him that he was not the cir-

cuit-rider. He wanted all the copies of the "Post." He wished to read the thing carefully. Hours later he came in and laid the papers down with a crestfallen air.

"Well, you are convinced?" I asked, smiling.

"No, I cannot see myself in it — the man I know I am," he answered, shaking his head.

"Of course not. You have never known yourself. I put you down as the Lord knows you," I retorted.

Then I reminded him of one incident after another; the prodigal daughter, for example — our visit to her.

"Is it not all written exactly as it happened?" I asked.

He admitted that it was, but he had not thought of himself then as I had pictured my itinerant. I told him this was not his business, but that I was his recording angel in this world, and had written his deeds down in the right columns.

How we did thrive on happiness for a time! Faith was the life and joy of the house. She was terribly sweet, and had a little kick to her feminine wit. Lundy was never moved to admiration as I was by the brilliance of her mind; but he had always walked with a sort of whimsical politeness before his offspring, and he was near worshiping the endearing charm of the child she had been and of the woman she became.

Still, there was bad blood between them occasionally now. Faith was just out of college, with a mass of accurate information not yet digested or assimi-

lated. She was so smart that she could meet her father in a discussion so ably that he was frequently offended, being a man, and by secret nature intolerant of brains in a woman. In vain, I besought Faith to yield when these arguments had reached Lundy's waspish stage. But I could not make her understand then that this is the only way to get the advantage even of the best man in a contention. She had lost some of her feminine elasticity in the college mill that turns out education.

The storm usually centered around the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe. Personally, I have never been sufficiently literary by instinct to be willing to die by an author if his works were assailed, nor to disturb the even tenor of one day by a too fierce defense of my dearest convictions if these were under fire. But Faith was like her father; she had a conscience which damaged her with its scruples. If she believed she was right, she thought it cowardly to give up. Never shall I forget the evening she squared up for that last fight on Poe's poetry. She did not like it, which would have been the correct feminine thing to say; but she could tell exactly why she did not like it. And she was near to routing her father with citations from critics and other academic stuff which has nothing to do with the value of poetry; still, it is authoritative. Finally he turned on her a look of diminishing scorn.

"You have a pebble for a mind, Faith," he exclaimed. "As hard as that, written all over with the minute hieroglyphics of other people's minds!"

This from Lundy, who had a passion for accurate

information and who should have been proud of his daughter's learning!

Faith sprang to her feet, flew to her room, flung herself upon the bed, and wept furiously for a few minutes. She could do that upon the slightest provocation; but she never sulked, and I never knew her to weep more than five minutes. Then she would reappear like April after a rain. So she came back now before I could screw my courage up to reproach Lundy. She was flushed, smiling, lashes still wet with tears. She sat on the arm of his chair, kissed the bald spot on top of his head, and giggled.

"I was getting the best of it!" she exclaimed, slipping down in the big chair beside him.

"You were, in a way," he admitted with a rueful grin. "Still, you were wrong. Study books less and study your mother more. She has brains. They are as fruitful as the earth. But she doesn't know anything. She does not need to know anything. She understands everything — and she likes Poe's poetry. That is what I mean."

Something like this he said to Faith, drawing her close and looking across at me. I did not understand myself what he meant, but I felt that he had said something about me to our mutual child designed to exalt me in her estimation. I should like to write something on that subject — the duty of parents to praise each other to their children. Many children never have the opportunity of learning how well they think of each other, but the contrary.

I do not think the idea of giving Faith a début party would have occurred to me if she had not been

invited during the winter to so many similar parties given for other girls. So she had one; not a big reception, but a curious elderly party, composed of the women I knew and the few young girls whom she knew. The old house glowed like a warm, kind heart in a gay mood. Open fires, so many flowers everywhere, and everybody laughing and making pretty speeches to little Faith, who stood beside me like the lily of herself with an armful of red roses.

She wore her evening gown — the same one. After all the Acts of the Apostles I had spent on it I could not afford to buy another one for this occasion.

We do have such queer thoughts when we should be thinking about something else. So many times that afternoon, seeing Faith saying all her lines to this little world of friends so well, feeling her sweet grace, I thought of the tiny child she used to be, flying around with her Christmas stocking on Christmas morning, so rich and so happy — just as now my thoughts go back to the lovely girl she was then with her roses and her smiles, passing with a pain that never grows less over the beautiful brave woman she became, so quickly gifted with all the powers and virtues of her race.

Everything turned out well for her then. She played and primped and went out just far enough in society. She had a few beaux and was shy on lovers. But presently she became engaged to a nice young man, not rich, but well-born and well-bred, with exactly the kind of mind to be companionable to such a woman as Faith would be presently.

Then something happened. Something always

does, once in so often. Maybe this is one of the ways Providence has of keeping us interested and attentive to our fate. You must watch the curtain in your own life as you do at a play. The thing is bound to rise after an intermission, on the next act.

This time it was I who flunked. If you are very well in your mind and spirit, and very busy, you may become seriously ill in your body without knowing that you are. I had not been working too hard, because nobody can. You are supposed to work up to your limit like every other living thing in Nature, thus meeting death on good terms according to your season. But I had probably been depleted by the anxiety attendant upon Lundy's illness, and by one sort of happiness after another, until I developed a physical ailment which was near to making an end of me.

I lay for weeks so close to death that for the first time in twenty-odd years I had a complete rest from living. A gallstone operation gives you a frightful pain which lasts a long time, but this merely physical anguish was nothing to the peace I enjoyed from being no longer responsible for anything. I could not worry about Faith's summer clothes or about Lundy's health. I could not even think a thought. Oh, blessed relief! Because thoughts "are like children born to us." They must be developed, and shaped up into words so that the reader may enjoy them without thinking them. While I lay there in mortal anguish, but enjoying the complete relaxation from duty, conscience, and every virtue, ideas flowed through my mind like a bright stream. I made no ef-

fort to detain them. Let 'em roll! Even at the time I had the sense to suspect that they might be full of dope wiggletails. For I was surviving on strychnine and getting whatever ease there is in morphine, which in my experience was very little except mentally.

Faith and Lundy appeared once or twice suddenly at unusual hours — say, in the middle of the night, when visitors are not allowed in a hospital unless their relative is dying. I could not even feel sorry for them. I was resting in this anguish, also, from the poignant tenderness of my heart; and I did not even have the breath to tell them that the doctor was mistaken and that I would be on hand as usual the next morning. For this was the first time I ever suspected that one breathes with the liver. But all doctors to the contrary, I contend that we do, because when that organ has been dissected and expurgated and stitched up, you do not get your breath for about nine days. It is a long time to live without air or food. But you can do it.

The worst of it was when I began to slow down toward the other world, faced about and began the long creeping climb back up again into life here. I might have made better progress if I had not discovered something was radically wrong with Lundy. He was very thoughtful, tenderly considerate of me and my whimpering invalid ways. After I came home from the hospital and lay for a long time on my bed, very restless in mind and body, he used to sit beside me and sing the old circuit-rider hymns. We do many kind things like this for one another in the house where love abides that sound ridiculous

in the telling; and I should not be telling now about those old tombs, associated with our early life in the itineracy, only the singing of them was one of the last things Lundy did for me. And I am copying it into this record to remind people who love each other, and are not dead, how the one who finally survives will remember little things as maybe they do not recall the great sacrifices made for their comfort and pleasure.

But I could feel rather than see that Lundy was not there; he was really gone. He was simply acting the kindness and tenderness he had always practiced toward me. He had the face of a man who is looking beyond life and time into strange distances, and I could not get up or do anything about it.

Thus the long hot summer passed. In August I was again at my desk, working hard to finish "Eve's Second Husband," but with the wound in my side still open.

Early in September, when I was sure I could finish this serial for the "Post," I persuaded Lundy to resign and take a vacation. But I could not go with him. That was the trouble. No man or woman wants to die. But they do sometimes for the lack of a moment's comforting.

Thus Lundy passed, far from home, on the sixteenth day of September, 1910.

No matter how dimly I tell it, the awful tragedy shows through. But to set down here the days of my anguish would be like showing a scar that has healed long ago as a bid for your sympathy. I am no mendicant.

This is a terrible thing to say, but it is the truth: the dead do die. At first we still companion them. They are more in our thoughts than when they lived. They are our thoughts, and we are their prisoners. But the time comes when we forget the feel of their hands in our hands, the lips that touched our lips so tenderly; when they merely stand mutely for so much we have known and felt, but can feel no longer. Then this image fades. We cannot see at last the features of that dear face, nor recall the tone of that voice. One thing remains — the loneliness, the silence, so much harder to bear for a while than when grief filled it with a thousand memories. Then, at least, we lived in pain.

Sometimes, especially since I have been writing this record, I have tried to recall Lundy, his presence, his expression, little ways he had, so brilliant and charming. They are all sunk as deep as the grave in my heart, and I cannot lift them. I remember them only like lines in a book to quote here. It is something like being dead myself, in part; an ease at last, where for so many years love wrought pain and wonders.

But if you sigh and shed tears when your husband has been dead twelve years, you sigh and weep for yourself, not for him. So it is no use to make a fuss. Nobody will believe you.

Faith was married in December, after her father's death, and went away with her husband, as happy a bride and groom as you could wish to see. That helped, seeing her go straight into love and marriage as a woman should.

But I do not remember feeling the need of help. I had taken a smaller, prettier house, maybe, for this wedding, that she might go out from one which had no dark memories of our grief. Now I was left alone in it. I must have felt that; but I do not remember such feelings, only sitting before the fire during the long evenings, bemused and strangely peaceful.

I worked very hard that winter, and grew stronger. I finished "Eve's Second Husband" and wrote "The Recording Angel," both of which were published in the "Saturday Evening Post."

Somebody has made a calculation to prove that thirty years are required to imbue a nation with a new idea. That would depend, I should think, upon the character of the idea. This nation was aroused to the idea of war in a few minutes not many years ago. In a comparatively short time our troops had crossed the ocean and were fighting in France. If it should be a peaceable notion, something to do with religion or morals or an intelligent idea of what education really is, I am certain we should wrangle about it for at least thirty years before we finally rejected it and went on our haphazard way.

But if your idea takes the form of a play, a motion picture, or of fiction, you get action much quicker. You last about as long as the fashion of a sleeve. And if by some chance quality of your work you survive as an author, you ought not to expect to be on the list of popular writers. They are annuals. Our times produce them like ragged robins, to be sowed again next year. When have you ever seen the same

author's name three years in succession on this list? Never, unless some philanthropist spent twenty-five thousand dollars advertising to keep it there.

But very few publishers are endowed with the philanthropic impulse. I do not think we ought to complain about that. As a business proposition we do not last. The reason is clear. In a nation of hasty-minded, impatient people, not one man of whom will keep the same model of an automobile two years, even if it still runs like greased lightning, if he can afford to exchange it for a different model, why should we expect him to go on reading the same author's books year after year? It is asking too much. Not enough people will do it. You are last year's literary lettuce. Your book may be a good one, but the idea of you has withered. They want something out of this year's spring garden of authors. This is the way it goes, and no harm done; gives writers a chance to be, and then not to be, which isn't so bad if you have ever been.

I speak without reserve here, and certainly without malice, because I have never been a popular author, only what you may call a durable one. I think I have survived all the wildcat writers who began to spit fiction about the time I began to tell men and women the secrets of their own hearts.

Still, there was a short period immediately after "A Circuit-Rider's Wife" appeared when the publishers were willing to risk the bet of at least one book on it.

I remember the day this perilous business for publishers began. One cold winter day, shortly after

Faith's marriage, I was sitting before the living-room fire, hard at work on "The Recording Angel," when somebody called. He introduced himself as Mr. Sears and expected me to know him, but I did not. As to that, I once did not know Colonel George Harvey when his name was quoted as an authority on literary matters in a letter I had from somebody connected with Harper and Brothers. I wrote and asked who Colonel Harvey was. Came a letter from that great man himself, in which he let me know with suspicious meekness that he was the head of the Harper publishing business. One is not necessarily an ignoramus because he or she does not know all the gods of this present world. Afterwards I had a brief visit to the Harveys, and liked Mrs. Harvey very much. The Colonel did not appear to be in need of being liked. But he was a pleasant sort of man. I remember how he looked in his golf togs. Sage-green coat with a short ruffled tail, knickerbockers to match, cut with what must have been gores on the sides, because they stuck out amazingly. I remember thinking that his thin legs would not have looked so fearfully thin if his other clothes had been a trifle less voluminous. But even at that, I could have withdrawn my attention from them if his stockings had not been clocked at the top with a flower-garden variety of colors! I have seen pictures of Mr. Harvey since he has been our ambassador to England which seemed to me strangely frivolous, not to say rakish. I do not think he should be too severely censured for this. He has a lot of brains and a streak of the clown in him. But I may be wrong about this,

knowing as little as I do about the way ambassadors should conduct themselves and how an elderly golf man should dress himself.

Now, coming back to my visitor that winter afternoon: He stood upon my doorstep proclaiming himself to be Sears, which meant nothing to me until he said he represented Appleton and Company. That meant a good deal. I had one publisher, but I was willing to take on another one. Authors are like shiftless tenants. They move every year, hoping to better their fortunes by migration, never realizing that the trouble is in them, not the land or the landlord. What I mean is that we change publishers frequently, when maybe we should change the quality of our stories.

After Mr. Sears had sat down and poked the fire, which is a vindictive spirit we all have toward fires, he let me know that he was the head of Appleton's, which meant more to me, of course.

Now this is something I cannot understand. As we sat there discussing books and royalties, my financial instinct grew like Jonah's gourd. When it came to the issue, I demanded a royalty no sensible publisher would have paid, and which caused Mr. Sears to rise majestically, put on his topcoat, hold his hat sarcastically suspended above his head as he wished me good-afternoon and went out.

I blush now to think how absurd my demands were; but then I did not feel so badly, because I knew a representative of another New York publishing house was even then on his way to see me.

Something had certainly gone to my head. Maybe

it was vanity. But my notion is that it was the same gambling instinct which brought my father home from the markets with fifty cents in his pocket after selling fifty bales of cotton; although the case of this young representative of the above-mentioned publishing house more nearly resembles the case of my father.

He agreed to pay a lump sum of so much for each of two books on delivery. In view of later experiences, I am inclined to the opinion that I snitched him, although you might not think so if I named the figures.

He was an enterprising young man, and caused himself to be interviewed that night for the leading Nashville paper. In the course of this interview he told everything, including the price he was to pay for these stories.

The effect was electrical. It turned out that Nashville had been hoarding literature for years. Authors whom no one suspected of being authors called upon this publisher the next day to submit their manuscripts, poetry, fiction, and historical works on the late war, meaning the Civil War, which was then the latest war we had. He fled at last, leaving much copy behind, but carrying with him a huge new composition suitcase filled with the intellectual wealth of the city.

I do not know how it may be with other writers, but I have met only one woman in my lifetime, who discussed the matter at all, who had no ambition or desire to become an author; and I never knew any man who reached the confidential stage of exposing

his talents who did not believe he could write if he only had the time to do it; and I have known all kinds, including those who cannot write their own names. This makes no difference. They feel the urge of authorship no less on this account. The world is full of mute inglorious Miltons — thank Heaven!

You will observe how advertising turns the trick. I had been doing literary work for years. I was already the author of "A Circuit-Rider's Wife," but no wave of fame had engulfed me until this publisher's interview in the Nashville paper exploited me as a sort of literary asset. But if my experience is typical of what happens, it is more outrageous than gratifying to wake up famous the next morning.

I did not know what had happened until the telephone began to ring. This was all very well, pleasant words from pleasant friends. But before noon of that day the business world had got wind of my exceedingly modest financial prospects. Followed a whirlwind campaign of agents and promoters, a wildcat banker who wrote a letter of advice about investments. He was willing to become entirely responsible for these. He wanted to help me. There was one man who was determined to sell me an automobile, and the representative of a monument syndicate wanted to erect a mausoleum over the grave of my husband. It was everybody, with anything to sell from a house to stock in a defunct coal company — something like forty letters in two days' mail, setting forth more bright business opportunities than exist in the world for a mere widow. I finally left

town in desperation and did not return until "The Recording Angel" was finished.

My confidence in human nature's financial aspects was practically destroyed for a time by this experience. I have missed doubling my income once or twice by refusing to take the advice of some wise man about investments. But I have missed losing everything I had a dozen times by not doing so.

If you are a woman — and a widow, at that — accustomed to rely with implicit confidence upon the judgment of the husband you used to have, pray earnestly that the Lord will help you to break the habit of confidence in mankind about your own affairs, because they have not your husband's reasons for protecting you and your little mite. Lovers and promoters belong to the same class. If you are a puling widow without sufficient spunk to bear your own loneliness, Nature will compel you to take the lover at his own valuation; but there is no reason for allowing a promoter to take what you have got. With him, "frisking" you is a cold matter of business; with you, it is laziness and moral weakness. Attend to your own affairs if you have any sense at all. If you have not, do not have any affairs. You can tell by watching yourself. If you are inclined to fold your hands, look sweetly and innocently into the face of somebody and say, "Mr. Smith, I know nothing about business. My husband always shielded me from every care of that kind. I know you are a good business man. I trust you implicitly to do the best you can with my investments" — I say, if you are silly enough to do such a thing as that, get right

up the moment Mr. Smith is gone, put your husband's insurance money in one of your last year's stockings and bury it under the woodpile; because if you do not, very frequently Mr. Smith actually will do the best he can — but not for you.

In the summer of 1911 I went abroad and wrote a series of articles for the "Saturday Evening Post" on the women of the Old World. I do not think there is so much difference now as there was then between those women and these women of the New World. But we are all still feminine to the very bone. We only conceal the attributes of our gender and temperament under a different manner. Maybe it is clothes, maybe it is the point of view we take of morals or politics or industrial economics or education or social hygiene. But we are practically the same, my dears, under all these aliases of our modern convictions. The change — the very great change is in the men. They are not so willing as formerly to assume the responsibilities of marriage. They are much more willing than formerly to give their wives encouragement to get divorces. The young ones are not settling down to work as fast as the young girls do. More of them are joining the bandit and bootlegging professions. Read your morning papers and see how many youths from sixteen to twenty-three committed burglary or some other crime the night before. They are putting the old robbers and yeggmen out of business. Presently our penitentiaries will become training schools for boys.

Maybe the modern mothers are not responsible for this state of affairs. Mothers have very little con-

trol over the fate of their sons after they are old enough to get out on the pavement. But modern fathers certainly are to blame. This is one reason why I say that men have changed. A father used to be somebody — in his own house, at any rate; now he seems to exercise little influence and practically no authority. There is something wrong with the old man. He has lost his grip. Little Johnny is not afraid of him and big John despises him — and nobody works but father. His sons are frolicking and spending at an age when he had gone to work and begun to save his money.

Don't ask me about the girls. I think the poor things are doing very well, considering the let-down in the standards of men, which have always determined the quality of women. Many more young women every year are earning their own clothes, if not their living. They must do it or dress economically, go nowhere and be despised.

When you become merely an author, you cease to be interesting. It is your copy that is entertaining. All you do is to keep on thinking and writing. You are not really living; you are producing. Between 1909 and 1913, the "Saturday Evening Post" published four serials from my industrious pen, a few articles and some short stories. I expected to live and die as an author in the "Post," which shows how much sense I did not have.

Maybe the idea of being settled down for life this way had a disastrous effect upon my copy. A feeling of security is a very dangerous thing. I reckon this is why it is written in the Scriptures, "Let him that

thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Anyhow, I fell.

I wrote a huge serial, put everything in it I knew or could think or imagine. I really thought it was a story. As a matter of fact, it was a brood of stories — some of them barely pipped, but not hatched.

About the time I should have received a check for the thing I received a telegram from the editor of the "Post," inviting me to come up there. I made haste to arrive in Philadelphia.

The story was not the sort of thing the "Post" could use. I was let down as gently as that. But there is no easy way of letting an author down. All of us are gamblers who have risked our time, our brains, and vitality in an adventure which, if it fails, is a terrific loss, not in money, but in that feeling of personal prestige we have for ourselves.

The weather was hot and sultry — July, to be exact. But I felt like a lost ewe of literature, with ice sticking to its wool, passing slowly out of sight across a bleak winter landscape.

Once when my publisher declined to publish a certain story he went with the manuscript to another, better publisher and persuaded him to risk it. They are good people, editors and publishers. My experience with the latter has never been madly affluent, but always pleasant, and not one editor has ever dealt unfairly with me.

I submitted the thing to the "Ladies' Home Journal." Mr. Bok was about my work as a sedate gentleman is about riding a rawboned, hammer-headed, cat-hammed horse — he would like to do it,

but when it came to putting his foot in the stirrup he invariably backed down and sent my little calico pony of a story back to me with the fatherly advice to try, try again. The trouble was that Mr. Bok was very partial to Hamlin Garland and similar authors, whose heroines sprained their ankles, fainted and were immediately kissed back to beatific consciousness by the hero. I never could master these details of strictly feminine fiction.

But at this time Mr. Bok was away somewhere bathing in the bright blue sea off the coast of Maine. A young man whose name I remember very well was managing editor of the "Ladies' Home Journal." Unreasonably, I thought I had some chance in view of these facts; and having left the copy with the young man I went on to New York.

Followed a week of editorial silence, which every author knows is the most baffling, depressing silence possible to endure unless you are in attendance upon your own deathbed and are waiting for the doctor to tell you so.

Then came the young man knocking at my door. He had the manuscript under his arm. He wanted it, he said, but Mr. Bok had not agreed with him about the merits of the story. In short, I had not been able to escape Mr. Bok. That wretched young man had gone all the way to Maine to show it to him!

One thing I noticed: the corner of the copy was soaking wet and smelled of salt water. I have often wondered which one of them tried to drown the thing and which one saved it.

Mark Sullivan was an editor then. I sent it to him.

He brought it back the next day. He was an Irishman then. My impression is that he has since become a political prophet. The reason I knew he was an Irishman was not on account of his name or the color of his hair or even the Killarney cut of his countenance, but because of something he said to me. He told me that I was a humorist and should stick to that. He said that humor was purely mechanical and could be acquired by practice, much, I suppose, as you might learn to play a banjo or some other frisky instrument.

Think of that, dear friends, in view of this record you have read — a woman who is a humorist, even by note, not by ear! It is not done. Nature is opposed to such freaks. I have been accused by many names, such as that of heretic, satirist, one who understands human nature — which is an iniquitous libel on human nature; but Mr. Sullivan is the only idealist who ever translated me as a humorist. What I mean is that he was being funny without knowing it, which is one of the characteristics of Irish wit.

The moment he was gone I went to the telephone and called up the editors of three New York magazines in quick succession. I told them exactly what had happened — namely, that I had written a serial for the "Saturday Evening Post" which had been rejected, and that I was now ready to cut it up into short stories. I invited each one of them to come over and have some.

I really expected them to come, and they did. You must believe in prayer and your own hopes, which is another form of prayer, if you expect to succeed.

First come, first served. Mr. Well and Mr. Duneka, of "Harper's Magazine," were these. They took the whole manuscript off with them and chose enough of it to make that story entitled "Caskets on the Installment Plan." It would have made a good motion picture. But let that go. It never did.

Mr. Duneka's heartiness was very soothing to my anxious mind at this time; and Mr. Well impressed me as being a perfect sentence, if you know what I mean — excellent human literature, prose in its best form, but not poetry.

That serial went the rounds, with each editor's name written on the parts he had chosen. I sold eight short stories out of it, and had some left over. I had spread a sort of literary quilt of many pieces over the country through these magazines, and felt very much refreshed by the performance.

In September of 1914 the "Post" sent me to the war zone in Europe. I have heard that I was the first woman correspondent sent abroad at that time; but this is probably a gross exaggeration.

My experiences during the early months of the Great War, when all was terror and confusion, have been written and need not be repeated here. I did not go so far or do so well as others who went over later. Looking back now, I know the impression I received then that will outlast all others was not the naked red horrors of war; but it was to see a world from which all cowardice had disappeared, when even the weakest and the meanest showed valor and utter forgetfulness of self, and where spiritual emotion reached the anguish of sublime faith in God. In

the face of wounds, death, desolation, and despair, they clung to their altars and prayed. Merciful God! Will I ever forget those churches in France where the women and old men crowded to recite their prayers, while they waited for news of that day's battle? I do not know what the world thinks. We seem to be in a bad, bitter mood; but this is something I do know: such prayers are answered, though ten thousand graves lie between us and the peace we prayed to save.

I have never had time to repine or to use up the strength of my days wishing for what I did not have and could not get. But all those years I was tagging along after Lundy in the itineracy, even in Oxford, and especially after we came to live in Nashville, I was secretly homesick for the country. I was like some poor potted plant, taken wild from the fields and imprisoned in a greenhouse, that never ceases to wither and wish in its insensate way for the fresher air of the open spaces, for rain from its own heavens instead of being sprinkled from a watering-can, for a little honest frost at the right time instead of thermometer-measured steam heat, for the visiting winds that pilot the seeds and the birds instead of this still, clammy, fragrant air in a plant hotel.

I always felt that way, especially after Lundy's death. The stir and confusion of city life depressed me. I was lonesome for the red hills of Georgia. Nothing else would do. I had become by this time the beloved stepchild of Tennessee, and I was grateful; but sometimes, driving along the roads between the towering cornfields of Tennessee or coming down

from New York on a train that sped arrogantly through the well-kept farms, the rich towns, and the smart little villages, I thought so much about Georgia that my eyes would fill with tears. There may be handsomer mothers, richer, and more prominent than your own good old mother; but she is incomparably dearer to you. This is the way I used to think about Georgia when I lived in Tennessee and went to and fro in the richer world more than I do now: as of a good old mother, wrinkled, with an apron of weeds over her kind old head, but patient and peaceful as the heart of love.

So at last I could bear it no longer, and came back to her for a little quietness and rest, as you go home sometimes after you are grown up and prefer to lie down on your mother's bed instead of that one reserved for you in the guest room.

I made a pilgrimage to a little gray farmhouse beside the road high up among the hills; primroses and phlox and verbena and great red poppies in the yard; a well of cold water at the end of the porch behind a mass of vines; flowers blooming everywhere, bees swarming, sheep in the pasture, little lambs playing, and saints singing old tunes inside the house.

This was the place where Lundy passed, and where I had come to spend a little time with memories of him, as women go to the cemetery and sit awhile beside the dust of their beloved.

It is exactly twelve years this month — May, 1923 — that I took a stroll one day higher up into the hills and came upon an old log cabin — merely the ribs, you may say, of a house. The door hung

upon one hinge, the floor was half decayed. There was a little thorn bush growing just inside, with its pretty green head leaning through the door. A wren had her nest in it, full to overflowing with tiny birds, their bills wide open.

The hidden hill upon which this cabin stood was covered with a dense growth of trees, brambles, bushes, and weeds. Still, I recognized it as my home. You do see things sometimes which belong to other people, but are by nature your own.

This cabin had been built by Pine Log, a Cherokee Indian chief, some time before 1830. There is a wide, level valley below, still seeded with arrowheads where the tribe must have had their wigwams.

I bought the place the following year — the forest of a hundred and fifty acres in the midst of which the cabin stands, the level valley of seventy acres below, and the comb of wooded hills beyond. I own it to the center of the earth and beyond the last star that shines above it — pretty stars, like a garden of white flowers overhead on dark nights. Two weeks out of every month I also own the moon. This is a good deal of real estate and sky and star stuff for one woman to have. I am so wealthy that not all the money in the world can buy this place from me. It is rich in minerals, but nobody shall ever bore a hole in it or dig anything out of it. For it is the green grave of my silence and peace, it is the sky-wide treasure-chest of my last memories of Faith. It is a living book we planned and planted together.

In 1914, when the cabin had been remodeled, the top of the hill upon which it stands cleared, and all

the things stored inside with which I meant to furnish the house, I closed the doors and went to the war zone in France. When I returned two days before Christmas, Faith had the house in order, fires burning, candles lighted, everything warm and glowing.

We had a family housewarming, settled down and began to live as I really believe the Lord intends that every man should live — very busy outside on the land, very happy inside when the day's work was done.

During the next two years Faith and Harry, her husband, gained by joy, by hard work, by all manner of experiments, even by the very violence of their happy energies, those experiences upon which Dora's letters in "From Sunup to Sundown" were founded.

I could write a book of happy human scriptures upon this period in our lives, though you must know it was not all happiness. We had our droughts and floods. We failed and won over obstacles or prejudices.

I remember the scene of Faith standing with a book on the rearing of pigs in her hand, reading certain directions for this business, while Harry, down among the pigs inside the pasture, carried them out to the letter. No modern mother who brings up her infant by the rule and the clock had anything on these two young people when it came to bringing up pigs in the way they should go.

This was how Faith acquired the material for the story "Perfect Pigs," which was published in the "Country Gentleman," and which won her reputa-

tion as a serious humorist at this business. I can see her now whisking up this road or that one in the neighborhood, going to doctor somebody's sick pig. And I can see her and Harry roaring off one hot day in a dusty little flivver, going for the veterinary because all their pigs had come down at once with an illness which might be fatal, but which proved to be worms. Such rejoicing! And I can see little Faith coming down the Dutch staircase in the living-room every evening, groomed and dressed, followed by Harry, also groomed and dressed, as if they expected to attend a play that night, when the nearest place of any amusement was in Atlanta, seventy miles distant.

We read Dickens aloud and discussed pigs or the crops or the next thing to be built, for we were still in the constructive period.

The active work and supervision was performed by them. I had the good sense to have this study where I am now writing built in a skirt of woods beyond the big cabin, and I spent all my time in it then, writing whatever came top in my mind. Some time during this period I gadded about a good deal, spending several months in New York every winter. I made some pleasant friends, E. S. Martin among them. A fine gentleman in whom there is much wisdom and kindness and that gentle effulgence of humor which never reaches the harshness of mere wit. I met Mr. Henry Holt, but not often enough to know him, only to like the twinkling-eyed mind he had socially. He always looked at you as if he had an amusing story to tell. I used to see a good deal of

the Montague Glasses. They were very hospitable people even before they became rich people. I attended an affair given by Grace Dodge one evening. It seems that Miss Dodge entertained genius in distress once a week. Anybody who was hungry or lonely or very poor could come if he was a writer, an artist, a sculptor, or a struggling musician. The rest of us went, anyhow. It was a fine old house — something of a museum, I should say, full of beautiful things and strange things from the ends of the earth.

Miss Dodge sat in the midst of these shadowy splendors, wearing a white satin gown, very loose and flowing. She literally sat, silent, apparently absorbed in her own thoughts. But a giver of good gifts. Never have I seen such a company of derelict geniuses — at least a hundred men and women. I remember one young man who wore his shabby coat buttoned to the neck. If there was a shirt underneath he was not willing to declare it. He was a sculptor — Norwegian, I think. He was certainly a savage with a ferocious mind. He went to the mat with everybody as if an idea were a bone to be gnawed and growled over. I have never heard so many people talking on so many different themes at the same time. They milled like a mob of brains. Such gall and bitterness of wit — minds in conflagration. I remember one man was seized with a vision of the destruction of New York City. He let it out in a flood of burning words. He did not leave one stone upon another. He was in a sort of frightful glee. It was appalling. All the time, that good, kind woman,

their hostess, sat in the midst of them like something peaceful and immovable in a strong wind.

The feast spread for these guests reached from one end of the long dining-hall to the other, and was topped off at either end with a sideboard laden with bottles. The food was substantial and in vast quantities, elegantly served. You went in and took what you wanted. Nobody got drunk, but there was not a scrap left on the table. Some of these people were really hungry. Many of them were the half brothers, so to speak, of famous men of letters or of successful men.

From such scenes as this I would fly back to my valley, where everything was peaceful and busy growing green; my young people up to their eyes in work, sowing or reaping.

But it was not to last. After two years Harry was offered a position that he could not afford to refuse. So Faith and her husband went away to their own life in another place.

IX

I CUT the world out after Faith and Harry were gone, as you give up a dear friend whom you used to visit occasionally. For now, besides my own work at the desk, I must manage the farm and direct my household affairs. I have done this for seven years. I have made two blades of grass grow where nothing grew before, without failing to produce at least one novel a year. This is one of the best ways of keeping well, and all your faculties alert as you grow older and are left alone in the silence of just time, one day after another day. So I have become a fearfully diligent woman. But I am less companionable. I have lost the art of conversation. You do, living alone, with nobody but your trees and your dog.

But Faith was not so far away that she could not drop down upon me frequently like a bright blessing. For three years I lived in anticipation of these visits. Such stirrings and doings when I knew she would be coming! Certain little cakes that she liked rising up and popping open in the oven, filling the kitchen with fragrance. The old cabin put a ring on its finger. Fresh flowers inside, everything swept and garnished. A fire in the living-room unless the weather was unbearably warm, because she liked the cheerful crackle of burning logs. The finest linen and the best china for the table, the best of everything, everywhere, because this was no prodigal son coming home to be wept over and cleaned up; this was a

dutiful daughter, bringing the light of her fair face. Mothers are pathetic, aren't they? Nothing can wean us from our children even after life weans them from us.

And when at last she came, the sound of her voice trailing off into sudden laughter, this old cabin hummed a tune, this place clapped its hands, little flowers beside the wall decided to bloom at once; the very cats going about with their tails up, the good old dog rubbing his great head against her, whimpering with joy.

You may infer the kind of daughter she was from this: being slim and lovely like her father's people, she would stand before the mirror and try to look like her mother, who was neither slim nor lovely. She would call upon me to witness this resemblance which I could never see.

In the evenings she read and corrected the copy that had piled up on my desk since her last visit. She was a good critic, honest, with a real sense of literary values. She could actually taste words and find them sweet, or tasteless and worthless, as the case might be. I have known her to shed tears when she felt obliged to disagree with me about some scene or sentence in a story, lest she should discourage me. But she invariably stuck to her guns.

She liked to sew a fine seam, and did it very well. She liked to mend her own things and wear them again, prideful of her thrift. You have seen the charming figures with which the bandboxes of fashionable milliners are decorated? Faith always looked as if she had stepped out of one of these boxes

without having disarranged one little white frill of herself.

She had my habit of reading the Bible, because she liked it, not for conscience' sake. She derived much succulent satisfaction from certain of the Old Testament Scriptures. The first chapter of Habakkuk fascinated her, and she could be moved to tears and tender merriment by that coat of many colors Joseph's father made for him. What I mean is that she could actually see that dearest son of Jacob strutting about in this coat. She would speculate about the length of it. She knew it must be rather long, according to the style in those days. Still, she could only visualize little Joseph in a rainbow jacket which barely reached his hips. Whereupon she would keen up a laugh that should have made these ancient Scriptures smile.

We exchanged the letters during this period afterwards published in "From Sunup to Sundown." She slipped them in along with her real letters to me once in so often, for when she was not at home she wrote to me every day.

You will know how to take this little wreath of memories to Faith, as you have so kindly permitted me to place a crown upon my circuit-rider's head, for they are now the very fragrance of my life, and a part of this record, from which she must pass presently as she has already passed from life itself.

I remember her last visit. It was on the occasion of my fiftieth birthday, which falls on Saint Patrick's Day. She suspected that I might forget this birthday, as was actually the case. Something hap-

pened on the morning of this day — a little thing, to be remembered longer than many great and important events in my life. When the morning mail came in there was no letter from Faith, since she was with me. I complained of this.

"In paradise, my dear, I should miss your letters," I said, laughing.

But she did not laugh. She gave me a look, startled, which softened into sadness, and made no reply.

Can it be that we have the prescience of death, even if we are in health, when death is terribly near? This was the last day we had together until I was called to her bedside a month later. She had been stricken suddenly and was gone very quickly. When she was within no more than a breath of the end, with her eyes fixed tenderly upon my face, she said:

"What a mother — what a mother you have been! Kiss me." And she would have me clasp her arms about my neck.

Hearts break, dear friends, but we cannot always break with them. We may have no reason left for planning and achieving, but we must go on living. So it is better to go on with courage. If we make a profession of our sorrows, virtue goes out of us; we become contemptible. Nothing that can happen is unbearable, else it would not happen. Some day when we are old and tired and our strength is gone, we have a right to fail, but not until then.

This queer thing happened to me: for many years I had insomnia. I was anxious all the time about something. I used to wake in the night, holding my breath, fearing for Lundy, or wondering about

Faith, who was away at school. The night after her death I slept soundly for the first time in thirty years. I seemed to have passed, too, into a sort of quietness. I had a terrible peace. I could not think, but I rested. What I kept saying to myself was that I would get up presently and go back to work.

All this happened in May of 1919, but it was October before I got back to my desk. Then presently I wrote "My Son," the last of the "Circuit-Rider" stories. The writing of this book was for me a great deliverance, because I regained my confidence and courage as a worker when it was published in the "Post" and was so kindly received.

Strangers are sometimes led to do beautiful things without knowing the value of their service. When this story came out, I received many letters, some of them beginning "Dear Mother." It was sweet to be called so by men in different parts of the world who belonged to different creeds and different walks of life, a sort of richness to feel that, now being childless, they recognized some quality still of the mother in me. My reputation has suffered some in the scrimmage of living, due partly to the accident of fame, and more particularly to the impudent and purposeful way I have sometimes carried out my convictions; but I have had so many of the kindest things done to me. Once back in the years shortly after "A Circuit-Rider's Wife" appeared, I received a check for two dollars and a letter from somebody who wanted to help the widow of a Methodist preacher. He said he was a traveling man who had wandered far from the fold, but that his father had been a

Methodist itinerant, and his mother had had a very hard time after his death. So he knew how it was with me, and was sending me the enclosed check. I kept it and wrote him a grateful letter, telling him not to worry, I was doing very well, but would let him know if I needed anything.

Judging by the letters I received, I am strong with these hardened-by-experience one-eyed men of the world who spend their lives on the road selling everything from silks to shoes. And I must be corrupt, after all, because I am touched by their good-will and faith in me as I should not be by the recommendation of the great saints. What I mean is that I would take the latter as a nickel's worth of praise as compared with dollars for the same kind from publicans and sinners. They know if you have the food of kindness and love in you which they need and crave, while your great saint may be a sort of Dives, with his spiritual barns full of virtues that you have not got, and he reared back chiding you for your poverty, which is your sin. This, dear brethren, is the test of a church — whether sinners and the ragamuffin souls of lost men believe in its integrity, its power to comfort and save. I am not comparing myself to a church, you understand; I am simply using a familiar illustration, and maybe giving myself a few airs, because it is a grand feeling to have people who read your stuff actually believe it is the truth, not fiction, and to be moved thereby to an act of charity, like writing the author such letters as I sometimes receive, or being moved to perform some other good deed.

Recently in an article on the "Unknown Greatest American Woman" I mentioned a certain widow who lives near me as being one of these women who hold the world together, who never lead a reform or a parade, and will have no Arlington monument raised to their memory. I merely told how poor she was, how cheerful, how good, and how hard she worked. I used her simply as an illustration, you understand. To my amazement, many sinners and one saint put their shoulders to this widow's wheel. She will probably be able to pay the mortgage on her farm this year, and she is even now dressed as fine as a fiddle on Sabbath days in the clothes you have sent her; and though she has always leaned hopefully toward a sublime faith in miracles, this faith has been confirmed by these gifts. The Lord can never astonish her again by His mercies, not even if she awakened some morning and found that her house had been painted sky blue by starlight. She can believe that strongly, you understand, in the diligence of His angels. This direct confidence in the Lord may cheat you who actually sent these gifts, but it makes a happy and fearless woman out of a very forlorn and terrified little widow with a houseful of children, which ought to satisfy you almost as well as if you had been praised by name in the county paper for your charity.

As to that, I have frequently advocated the establishment of a good-news service in this country. We are acquiring a catastrophic taste for news because too much is published about crime and vice while we take our virtues for granted, as we never praise the

heavens for the stars that shine there, having been so long accustomed to the loveliness of these stars. This is wrong. We are cheating ourselves of the best truth. I would not go so far as to shout that the millennium is at hand in spite of the courageous faith of the Seventh-Day Adventists, but if you can possibly forget the bad news you read in the papers this morning, the gossip you heard yesterday, the erotic or bandit play you saw last night, and look about you with a hopeful eye, it must become perfectly clear to you that we are doing better and are at least twice as far from perdition as we are from paradise.

We are not worse men and women than we used to be; we are simply clouded with too much bad information. Every telegraph line and cable has become an international gossip. If we cannot know all the good that is going on in the world, we ought not to be so carefully informed about all that is going wrong in the uttermost parts of the earth. Sometimes I wish we could live the good little lives we used to live according to every man's own domestic Monroe Doctrine. I wish the mind of our times would settle down, and that we might be given, as we used to be, to revivals, picnics, and romance. I want to be peaceful and "sit and sing my soul away to everlasting peace."

As it is, I must be a new woman in a new world, and start all over as a citizen and a voter. At my age, with my experience and traditions, this is not only a hardship, it is actually confusing to my moral sense. I have always known that women ought to have the suffrage; but it was an awful knowl-

edge, and I was not one of those who pranced and champed the bits to bring this great responsibility upon our shoulders. Even after the men were worried into doing their duty by us and giving us the suffrage, I was too long about exercising my right to vote. This was partly due to the fact that women in this section have found it difficult to register. I drove forty miles over rough roads in a flood of rain before I finally found the right line in the right book to write my name, politically speaking. About this time we had an election of county officers. I went to Pinelog, filled out a ballot according to my conscience, stuck it through a broken window-pane in the little weather-beaten court-house where the local justice of the peace interprets the law on our minor misdeeds, saw it numbered and deposited in an earthenware pitcher on a plain deal table, and came away feeling very queer.

Scarcely one candidate out of more than a dozen for whom I voted was elected. This proved conclusively to me that women ought not to vote merely according to their good little home-and-fireside consciences, but much more shrewdly than that. So at the very outset of my ballot-bearing career my moral sense must be revised. I must get that admirable volume of essays written years ago by Agnes Repplier on "Compromises" and read it again. My recollection is that this was a soothing treatise on softened righteousness written in an elegant literary style.

You are not to infer by the foregoing complaint that I shall shirk my duty or that I do not under-

stand politics. I was born with a political spoon in my mouth. I can tell you a good deal of what will happen if we get a Democratic President next time; also, what will keep on happening if he is a Republican. But Heaven scarcely knows what may become of us if he is neither the one nor the other! This is the reason why I do not agree with the policy of the Federation of Women's Clubs — if, indeed, it is a policy, or only an elastic plank in the political platform of this great corporation of women — which is that we should vote on issues, not men, nor according to party lines. This is a way of spattering suffrage, not of using it. I think the women of this country should get into the two great political parties, stand by them and make them better if they can.

We hear that the cultured, highly intellectual women are already in the Republican Party. Let them stay there, though it is most unusual for men or women who are really of this class to boast about it. In any case, the Republicans ought not to confine themselves to the voting capacity of such women. The pioneers brought over another, hardier type of mothers and maidens when they began to build this nation. I cannot believe it is important to be cultured and learned in order to vote honestly and wisely. We have never heard that these qualifications are expected in the male voter. Culture is a good thing unless the wrong kind of people get it. Then nothing can make it culture. Some women with good common sense and excellent characters who have never been able to afford the luxury of cul-

ture may vote for the Democratic candidate for President. I shall probably do so myself, and I came from a remarkably high-browed ancestry that never boasted of its culture, never having felt the need of any sort of artificial varnish to prove its worth or breeding.

But if I do vote for him, and he should become the twin brother of labor unions, or the pious protector of the rights of man by way of being charitable to the liquor interests, there will be something doing within the folds of the Democratic Party, so far as I am concerned; not much, of course, but all I can do.

The principles of the Republican Party appeal to me. They are beautiful. They have a roll and a rhythm that stir the imagination. They are almost as altruistic when an orator recites them as the ideals of the Democratic Party. But they are like the Beatitudes in the Scriptures, so highly praised by Christians who do not practice them.

Now it seems to me that the Republican women should get into that party and practice some of the ethics that are supposed to characterize culture. And all the Democratic women in this country should get into the Democratic Party and practice those decent age-old virtues we had before anybody studied Ibsen, sociology, or grand opera, until they make this party what it claims to be but never will be unless the women clean it up. But whatever we do, we should not go traipsing into the subpolitical parties, whose leaders have an appealing eloquence quite too scriptural and brotherly to be sincere in their professions. What they want is what the rest

of us have got, whether we earned it honestly or dishonestly, and they preach this sort of thievery in the name of brotherly love. When it comes to politics, they want not only to be their brother's keeper, but his administrator.

We need at least forty different churches to accommodate the perversities of our religious nature, but we need only two political parties to hold the balance and keep each one properly checkmated in our human affairs. I am a firm believer in evolution, especially in politics, but not in radical revolutions in politics. These Democrats and Republicans may be mean and corrupt, but they are sane. We ought to resist our emotional natures, avoid doubtful affiliations, and stick by them like sensible women, is the way I feel about it.

But it is a real cross to extend my feelings this far. For so many years I did not think about the issues of national life. It was not my duty to do so. I was only a subcitizen working out the problems of my own family life. This record proves that they kept me fairly busy. Now I should like to slip down into the drooling peace of old age, but I cannot do it. I must keep my wits sharpened for conscience' sake. I must begin to mix politics with religion, which may teetotally ruin my religion at the very last, when I shall be in the gravest need of it. Apt as not I shall backslide and turn some trick in the fervor of a political campaign. Better people than I have fallen from grace this way.

Sometimes I am tempted to believe in predestination in spite of the fact that I have felt like a free

moral agent all my life, and know very well that there is no such thing as time, that it is a term used by men to denote the limitations of our mortal minds. Still, to all intents and purposes, I might as well have been predestined. That gale rumpling the daybreak clouds and rattling the old loose-jointed farmhouse where I was born and began to burn like a very dim candle was merely an incident of the season; but it does seem to me that I have been blown forward all my life by some March wind of destiny. I have never had any settled weather, never reached the warm, bright afternoon of life where a woman of my age should be able to sit quietly and muse over what has been. I seem to be still in the morning hours of the high, windy business of doing and achieving. My color is good, my eyes are clear, my hair will not turn gray, my strength will not fail. I never produce the impression of needing assistance if there is a flight of steps to climb. No one suspects that I am as afraid as any other woman of thunder and lightning. I have lived alone for seven years in this old cabin; but no one knows that I am nervous at the least sound in the dark, if it is no more than a dead leaf rustling across the frozen ground outside on a winter night. I am supposed to be a hardy, level-headed person, able to take care of myself and to perform my day's work with both hands.

It is all a mistake. I am tired. I long to give up, sit down, and have some one with a poor-dear expression slip a cushion under my feet. I desire to show my tears like an honest woman, press a fine cambric handkerchief to my eyes and have eau de

Cologne dabbed on my brow. Not that there is anything the matter; I simply wish to exercise the emotional birthright of my sex. But I have never had the chance to do so. For one thing, I have never been able to assemble an audience, however small, that would believe in the genuineness of the performance.

I am not complaining, you understand; but if it was all to do over again I should be careful not to develop a strong character. I should content myself with a dimmer image of the gentler virtues. I should appeal more to the sympathy and tenderness of my fellow men and women. I should be less reliable and more lovable. I should do less good and get more good done to me, which, if you think about it, is a profitable way of swelling the sum total of goodness by distributing it more evenly, like a tax upon the kindness of other people. At the same time it might keep you from giving yourself the airs of a superior person, which is the secret temptation of every capable person.

This is what I think now, being for the moment ungraciously disposed, and feeling that I may have been shriven by too many virtues not of my own choosing. But if I should be born again it is possible that I might blow through life on a stronger gale. We cannot tell about such things. We can only boast or grumble.

I have survived so many whose lives were a part of my life that now there seem to be drifts of silence all about me, warm still with a thousand tender memories, luminous, like the sunshine the man car-

ried into the dark forest to dry his rain-drenched house and the tears on his wife's cheeks. I have only to stir them as she stirred her sunshine to be cheered and comforted.

The sorrows we have had do bloom after a while. They shed an immortal fragrance through our last days. This is why old people live so peacefully in the past. It is a provision the Lord makes for them. They cannot be disturbed by our disturbances. They live and think in the terms of memory, as we breathe sweet perfumes, and are refreshed.

Lundy and Faith are gone, but their light so shines about me that I have had no darkness within for a long time.

Two years ago this morning, on the thirty-first day of May, my sister, mentioned in the earlier part of this record, passed away. She was asleep here in the upper chamber of the old cabin. She had finished everything. Her house was in order. Her sons were grown and gone. Sitting alone in her house she had followed them to the camps, into aeroplanes above the earth, across terrible seas, through the battles of Saint-Mihiel and the Argonne Forest with a courage that never blanched. By the hardest, being now very frail, she had survived to welcome them home and to see them take their places like men bound by duty to work and achieve. There was nothing else for her love to accomplish in them. So her will to live failed at last in a dream. But what a trail of memories she leaves behind her in bloom!

Mother died long, long ago, shortly after my marriage. Father, now in his eightieth year, alone sur-

vives of all those who shared their love and days with me.

I doubt if the very old will be damned, even if they were not good during some earlier period of their lives. They become so innocent of the flesh before they leave it. It is the flesh and the carnal mind that goes with it which snare us into most of the troubles we ought not to have. Father was designed by Nature to be a great man, but he was born of mettlesome stock, orphaned in his youth, made courageous, and spent five years in Lee's army. But he chose his sins like a gentleman and executed them with a flourish that left nothing to be suspected. He cheated no man, he paid his debts, which was a magnificent achievement when you consider that he was a prodigal spender and never hesitated to make a debt. He fairly strutted beneath burdens that would have crushed the average man. He could cast his sins from him as far as the east is from the west and practice all the saints' virtues with a sincerity that was more than convincing; he imparted elegance and splendor to righteousness.

Now he is very old and good. Goodness is a sort of degree Nature has conferred upon him. He appears somehow to have missed all our formulas of repentance. He knows he is about to be turned out of himself into the cold dust of the grave. That makes no difference. Clothed in the shining tatters of his sins, and the still more brilliant tatters of his virtues, he is taking one long, slow step at a time around the last corner toward eternity. Sometimes I have caught him staring wistfully at the closed

gates. He will ask a question that feels like a lonesome traveler fumbling in the dark for the latchstring in the door of his own house late at night. What I mean is that he knows where he belongs — inside. And if nobody stops him he will take a front room in that great house of many mansions.

To me he is adorable. Honest to the last, nothing that he will condescend to conceal, tired out, going home at last to be cleaned up, his corruptions changed to incorruption, his body raised a spiritual body, all his splendid tatters rustling like very long wing feathers — all in the twinkling of an eye.

Let those who wish to believe in damnation, or who feel it is their duty to do so, do their duty. As for me, I know we shall all arrive at last and be taught the A B C's of eternal life somewhere, somehow, else we are at the mercy of an almighty malignant power. The evidence is to the contrary.

I have not set down everything that should have gone into this record. My memory slips off and comes back the next day to remind me of a certain incident that should have gone into the copy I wrote the day before or the week before last week. But let that go; we never get all of life into the lives we live, either. We frequently leave out some of our greatest deeds and never realize what we have done until years later, when we look back and miss the shining spot that deed might have brightened in our past.

I wish now that I had copied more of my childhood into this record — what I saw, what I felt, perfect songs of emotion, perfect sorrows in quick tears.

Children know and feel the best things. They are luminous beings in a dark world; not good, but so innocent of what we become even at our best. If ever I get the time I should like to write something more about that — When I Was a Child — and make clear the faith that was in me then, so different from the weary faith I have now. A short path was then a long journey, but my eyes were field glasses that saw happiness everywhere and my heart was a tune that hummed joyfully all day long.

I was a good little outlaw, seeking adventures in the grass, keeping company with the larks and sparrows, high above my head. Nothing was an effort, and I did everything I could think, never deterred by the question of whether it was right or wrong, never guilty of my small sins until the sense of guilt was thrust upon me. What sweet freedom! What a grand, busy life of seeing and knowing and believing everything! But I shall never write it now. As we grow older time gets short. The days that used to be so long hurry us and tire us, and we cannot finish what we meant to do.

Dear hearts, we must live again just to end life properly with all our duties done and that last prayer said which we did not have the breath to say! I do not think it will be prayer in my case, never having formed the begging habit spiritually; but when I think about it I am actually troubled lest I should die with a good sentence in me somewhere unsaid! This is not vanity; it is love. For so many years the world has been my only confidant. Sitting here in this quiet place, screened from your sight by a thou-

sand hills and all the trees between, I have told you the very secrets of my heart to bear tender witness to the same secrets in your heart, that not one of you might feel such silence and loneliness as I have had. So it would be terrible at the very last if I should suddenly see clearly with my eyes closed, know the one thing we never really know that would ease your mind of the great doubt — and not be able to tell you! To have knowledge and no strength with which to reveal it! I shall not rest easy in my dust, beloved, with one word of truth unsaid that could comfort your faith!

As to that, I do not expect to rest anywhere long. It is a doless business for one who has been so busy. When it is all over, and I am harvested with the saints in paradise, I shall be wanting to pay a visit back home. Not to haunt anybody, you understand, and surely not to encourage the spiritualists by communicating with them. But I should want to see this old cabin, the ruddy gloom of the living-room on a winter night when the logs are burning in the big fireplace. If strangers sat about the hearth, I would not see them. I would see those who belonged to my own life and my heart upon the earth. My people, every one, and my dog lying upon the rug. I should want to see the dark scallop of the pines against the skyline above this valley. I would have again the comradeship of these hills and this grass where the shadows lie at evening long and slim like fallen spires.

Only one tree in heaven is recorded, which must be a large one, with leaves "for the healing of the na-

tions," but with too many saints sitting under it if there is only one. I should feel the need sometimes of one of my own trees here at home as you like to be alone with a friend. And I should be wishing to see the stars once in a while from this place and this distance, because they are smaller and appear younger, happier, than they possibly can if you are as near as heaven to them. I dread a closeup view of any star. It might turn out to be a planet full of bad weather and strangers. Long ago I made friends with this particular world which is my world. There are not so many stranger to me left in it. I may not know the men and women who pass me on the road, in the street, or jostle me in the crowd, and they may not recognize my face, but they know me. Since the "Circuit-Rider" days I have written so many words to them. So they know me. The thought of that always seems to preen the wings of my spirit. I always feel a little gay, lifted when I go abroad in the world, as one does among dear friends, whether a single soul speaks to me or not.

I am not expecting to be one of the immortals in your memory, you understand. I leave these high places for the great writers who belong there, but if after a very long time in heaven I should come home for a moment and find, say, this record, a very old and dingy book open upon your table and a pair of spectacles near by, I should know that some kind old heart had been refreshing himself upon my heart and I should feel tremendously puffed up.

At the very last I should be giving everything I have, and in need of nothing that you could give.

Still I have one request to make of you — that you bury me at the end of the day, not in the middle of it, which appears to be the fashionable hour for funerals now. Everybody is in a hurry to get back to lunch and to his office, on time. It is hard on the dead, beloved, and they may feel it for all you know. I should prefer a quiet summer evening for my funeral, after the day's work is done, when you have nothing else on your mind, and can come back home, sit in the moonlight and think a few kind thoughts of me. I know how Dickens felt when with his last breath he said, "Keep my grave green," but never mind that. This is no Dickens. This is a good kind old woman who kept the faith and really loved you, and wishes to be remembered for the things she had written for you, as if her heart were your heart, not with monuments, please, but with a laugh now and then when you recall a word or phrase that used to belong to her.

THE END